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Matthes, Britta Katharina

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From National to Pluri-National:
Rethinking the *transformation* of the Bolivian state through struggles
for autonomy

Britta Katharina Matthes

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
University of Bath
Department of Social and Policy Sciences
October 2017

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Abstract

Following a series of profound conflicts in the early 21st century, Bolivia became the world's first pluri-national state in 2009. The idea of the pluri-national state goes beyond the (uni-)national state; imagining a state that allows peoples' coexistence on an equal footing in a state that facilitates their autonomy (Garcés, 2011). However, recent research indicates that, in practice, the Bolivian state transformation is full of tensions.

Based on a framework that brings together Open Marxism (Holloway and Picciotto, 1977; Clarke, 1991c; Bonefeld *et al.*, 1992b, a; Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995b) and the 'de-colonial option' (Quijano, 2006), I offer in-depth insights into contemporary Bolivia. In this, I understand the state as the political *form* of the social relations of capital, which is marked by modernity and its 'darker side' - coloniality (Mignolo, 2011). This thesis offers tools for studying how the state 'translates' indigenous- and non-indigenous struggles into policies, law and polity (Dinerstein, 2015) while also mediating external pressures.

After embedding the pluri-national state in its historical context, covering the emergence and development of the Bolivian state form, I look in depth at the pluri-national state. In this, I unpack the multifaceted struggles for autonomy and find that when mediating autonomy into the pluri-national state, something essential to the definition of plurinationality is lost in translation. First, struggles for autonomy as peoples' self-determination and deepened decentralisation became subordinated to, yet not annihilated by the government's social-communitarian model that is advocated in the name of the *pueblo's* self-determination and ensures the state's material basis. Secondly, state-recognised autonomy comes at the cost of submission to a state which continuously operates pre-dominantly according to modern/colonial ideas of law, order and organisation. The contradictions found in the pluri-national autonomy regime and the state are inherent in it and hence, cannot be resolved through reform.

299 words

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Table of abbreviation

Abbreviation	Original expression, English translation (if applicable)
ALBA	<i>Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América</i> , Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America
AND	<i>Acción Democrática Nacionalista</i> , Nationalist Democratic Action
AIOC	<i>Autonomía Indígena Originaria Campesina</i> , 'Indigenous-Original-Peasant' Autonomy
APG	<i>Asamblea del Pueblo Guaraní</i> , Assembly of Guaraní Peoples
BOB	<i>Boliviano</i> , Bolivian Boliviano (Bolivian currency)
CAINCO	<i>Cámara de Industria, Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de Santa Cruz</i> , Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services and Tourism of Santa Cruz
CAO	<i>Cámara Agropecuaria del Oriente</i> , Agricultural Chamber of the East
CEDIB	<i>Centro de Documentación e Información Boliviana</i> , Bolivian Documentation and Information Centre
CEJIS	<i>Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social</i> (Bolivian NGO)
CIDOB	<i>Confederación de Pueblos Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano</i> , Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of the Bolivian East
CNA	<i>Consejo Nacional de Autonomías</i> , National Council of Autonomies
CNTCB	<i>Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia</i> , National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia
COB	<i>Central Obrera Boliviana</i> , Bolivian Labour Federation
COMIBOL	<i>Corporación Minera de Bolivia</i> , (public) Mining Corporation of Bolivia
CONAIOC	<i>Coordinadora Nacional de AIOC</i> , National Coordinator of AIOC
CONAMAQ	<i>Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu</i> , National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu
CONDEPA	<i>Conciencia de Patria</i> , Conscience of the Fatherland
CORDE...	<i>Corporación Regional de Desarrollo de...</i> , Regional Development Corporation of...
CPE	<i>Constitución Política del Estado</i> , Political Constitution of the State
CSE	<i>Conference of Socialist Economists</i>
CSUTCB	<i>Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia</i> , Unified Syndical Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia
EGTK	<i>Ejército Guerrillero Túpac Katari</i> , Túpac Katari Guerrilla Army
ENDE	<i>Empresa Nacional de Electricidad</i> , National Electricity Company
ETA	<i>Entidad Territorial Autónoma</i> , Autonomous Territorial Entity
FLACMA	<i>Federación Latinoamericana de Ciudades, Municipios y Asociaciones de Gobiernos Locales</i> , Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Municipal Associations
FUL	<i>Federación Universitaria Local</i> , Local University Federation
GAD	<i>Gobierno Autónomo Departamental</i> , Departmental Autonomous Government
GAM	<i>Gobierno Autónomo Municipal</i> , Municipal Autonomous Government
IDH	<i>Impuesto Directo a los Hidrocarburos</i> , Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons
IEHD	<i>Impuesto Especial a los Hidrocarburos y Derivados</i> , Special Tax on Hydrocarbons and Derivatives
INE	<i>Instituto Nacional de Estadística</i> , National Statistics Institute
IOC	<i>Indígena Originario Campesino</i> , indigenous-original-peasant
LMAD	<i>Ley Marco de Autonomías y Descentralización Andrés Bóñez</i> , Framework Law of Autonomies and Decentralisation Andrés Ibáñez
MAS(-IPSP)	<i>Movimiento Al Socialismo (-Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos)</i> , Movimiento for/towards Socialism (-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples)
MBL	<i>Movimiento Bolivia Libre</i> , Free Bolivia Movement
MEFP	<i>Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas Públicas</i> , Ministry of Economy and Public Finances
MIP	<i>Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti</i> , Pachakuti Indigenous Movement

MIR	<i>Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria</i> , Revolutionary Left Movement
MITKA	<i>Movimiento Indio Túpac Katari</i> , Indian Túpac Katari Movement
MNR	<i>Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario</i> , Revolutionary Nationalist Movement
MPD	<i>Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo</i> , Ministry of Development Planning
MRTK	<i>Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Katari</i> , Revolutionary Túpac Katari Movement
MRTKL	<i>Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Katari de Liberación</i> , Revolutionary Túpac Katari Movement of Liberation
MSM	<i>Movimiento Sin Miedo</i> , Movement Without Fear
NFR	<i>Nueva Fuerza Republicana</i> , New Republican Force
OEP	<i>Organó Electoral Plurinacional</i> , Pluri-national Electoral Organ
PDES	<i>Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social en el marco del Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien</i> , Economic and Social Development Plan in the framework of Integral Development for Living Well
PGTC	<i>Planes de Gestión Territorial Comunitaria para Vivir Bien de las Autonomías Indígenas Originarias Campesinas</i> , Plan of Territorial Communitarian Management for Living Well of the AIOC
PND	<i>Plan Nacional de Desarrollo</i> , National Development Plan
PSDI	<i>Plan Sectorial de Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien</i> , Sectorial Plan of Integral Development for Living Well
PS-1	<i>Partido Socialista-1</i> , Socialist Party-1
PTDI	<i>Plan Territorial de Desarrollo Integral para Vivir Bien</i> , Territorial Plan of Integral Development for Living Well
SEA	<i>Servicio Estatal de Autonomías</i> , State Service of Autonomies
SIFDE	<i>Servicio Intercultural de Fortalecimiento Democrático</i> , Intercultural Service of Democratic Strengthening (Unit in the OEP)
SOL.bo	<i>Soberanía y Libertad de Bolivia</i> ; Sovereignty and Freedom of Bolivia
SPIE	<i>Sistema de Planificación Integral del Estado</i> , Integral State Planning System
TCP	<i>Tribunal Constitucional Plurinacional</i> , Constitutional Pluri-national Tribunal
TCO	<i>Tierra Comunitaria de Origen</i> , Comunal land of origin
TIOC	<i>Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino</i> , Indigenous' originals' peasants' territory
UCS	<i>Unidad Cívica Solidaridad</i> , Solidarity Civic Unity
UD-A	<i>Unidad Departamental Autonomista</i> , Departmental Autonomous Unity
UNASUR	<i>Unión de Naciones Suramericanas</i> , Union of South American Nations
VERDES	<i>Verdad y Democracia Social</i> , Truth and Social Democracy

Chapter 1. Introduction

On the 18th of March 2009, the Bolivian President Evo Morales signed Supreme Decree 48/2009. The sole article of the decree determines that, in compliance with the new constitution (CPE), the denomination PLURI-NATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA should be used in all public and private acts, in diplomatic relations and official correspondence at the national and international level. With this, Bolivia formally turned into the first and so-far only pluri-national state in the world. This took place in what has been described as the 'region's most radical socio-political terrain', one marked by social conflicts erupting in the early 21st century, most visible in the 2000 and 2003 Water and Gas Wars (Webber, 2016, p.1855). While some articles of the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution point to pluri-national characteristics of the Ecuadorian state and society¹, Ecuador continues to be a Republic (Art. 1) and is not a pluri-national state *sensu stricto*. Although Bolivia is constitutionally defined as a Pluri-national State (Art. 1 CPE) and the preamble states the intention of leaving the colonial, republican and neoliberal Bolivian state behind, the CPE also indicates that refounding a state is far from straightforward. Whether literal errors or part of a pact, the Articles 11 I, 146 II, 202 No 1 and No 7, 238 No 3 and 339 I of the CPE still refer to a 'Republican' state. With this thesis, I propose that the practical experiment of the pluri-national state invites a reconsideration of how to approach the state theoretically and a reassessment of the conceptual and methodological tools used to make sense of it.

In this opening chapter, I first show how the idea of the pluri-national state challenges and pushes the boundaries of the state in an unprecedented way and engage with recent research on the pluri-national transformations in Bolivia and Ecuador. I show that while many researchers identify tensions, contradictions or a gap in pluri-national practice: between ideas, theory or government rhetoric on the one side and reality, practice or government policies on the other, they pay little attention to the category of the state and the specificity of the pluri-national state idea. Building on this, I suggest that looking more closely at the state has great potential for unpacking and making sense of the seemingly contradictory pluri-national scenarios. To take the pluri-national idea more seriously, I argue that it is necessary to look more closely at self-determination/autonomy, which constitutes the 'umbrella demand' of indigenous peoples (Díaz Polanco, 1996, p.157). Then, the aims, objectives and research questions of the thesis are set forth, followed by a mapping out of the potential contribution and relevance of this thesis. Finally, I outline the remaining chapters.

¹ Its 2008 Constitution defines Ecuador as a 'pluri-national (...) State' (Art. 1). Articles 6, 257 and 380 mention 'pluri-national Ecuador', 'pluri-nationalism' as principle and Ecuador's 'pluri-national identity'.

1.1. The pluri-national state: Idea and recent debates on the practical experiments

Following Tapia Mealla, the 'pluri-national horizon is the possibility of a democratic reconstitution of the country, which sometimes faces [the need] to overcome hierarchical relations between *pueblos* and cultures, that is, internal colonialism' (Tapia Mealla, 2015, p.8, author's translation). He saw the pluri-national reconstitution of the state as 'an opportunity to design multicultural co-government', making clear that 'in order to be democratic, it is not enough that it is co-government of representatives of different cultures but co-government in and from the bosom from each of those' (Tapia Mealla, 2007, p.174, author's translation). This indicates that the pluri-national state idea radically differs from the notion of the (uni-)nation state, which has served as inspiration and mental model for most state thinking. Unlike the (uni-)nation state, the pluri-national state idea implies that the state does not only recognise the existence of different cosmologies, but also facilitates the self-determination/autonomy of peoples, understood as nations, and promotes their participation in decision-making on matters that concern them all (Garcés, 2011, p.63).

As Quijano (2006) points out, indigenous peoples did not just want state power, they wanted a *different* state. These ideas mean pushing the boundaries of thinking the state and breaking with how indigenous people have previously related to the state. For Maybury-Lewis, '[t]he salient characteristic of indigenous peoples [...] is that they are marginal to or dominated by the states that claim jurisdiction over them' and are 'not integral to the states that (...) rule over them' (Maybury-Lewis, 1997, p.8). The pluri-national idea seeks not only to end exclusion, but to challenge the very aims of assimilation to and inclusion in the dominant, Western epistemology as occurred in the unfinished 1952 Revolution and the 1990s multicultural reforms. Overcoming these obstacles with the *different* state is necessarily also a project of decolonising state and society.

With the increasing mobilisation of indigenous peoples in the late 20th and early 21st century and their rising influence in Bolivian and Ecuadorian local and national politics – seemingly culminating in the adoption of the aforementioned pluri-national constitutions – enthusiasm spread among observers and researchers. Yet, more recently, reality does not seem to live up to the expectations associated with the imagined pluri-national states. Reyes (2012) observed increasing 'revolutions within revolutions', in which sectors of society that had brought these governments into power, speak against them, accusing them of failing to deliver what they had promised. The key turning point in Bolivia was the escalation of the TIPNIS conflict² in 2011, which 'created a political firestorm' (Fabricant and Postero, 2015, p.425). It brought discrepancies between and among highland and lowland peoples and peasants to the surface and showed the government's limited capacity and/or willingness to

² See, for example, Webber (2012) and Morales (2013).

handle the situation in the interest of all (Morales, 2013). Nevertheless, the Morales and Correa/Lenin governments have been remarkably durable, and have so far resisted the 'ebbing' of most governments that swept into power with the pink tide in the early 21st century (Rojas, 2017).

Turning in more detail to the research conducted on the pluri-national experiences in Bolivia and Ecuador, the key questions have revolved around whether and how far pluri-nationalism could 'reconcile both indigenous rights and strong state sovereignty, while avoiding new exclusions' (Gustafson, 2009, p.992). In the following subsections, I briefly revise key strands of debates that tackle crucial elements of the pluri-national state idea and assess how these played out in practice. I will return to some of them in the literature review.

Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir

In Ecuador and Bolivia, the *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* ('good life'/'living well'³) entered public debates, providing an 'opportunity for imagining other worlds' (Acosta, 2013). The concepts are both based on ancient holistic cosmovisions and philosophies of indigenous peoples, focusing on living harmoniously with Mother Earth, other humans and with oneself (Walsh, 2009b). Yet, Zibechi highlights the limited attractiveness and feasibility of the *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* as

those who practice it (...) are impoverished minorities that do not elicit excitement from anyone, not even the intellectuals who formulated these key concepts within the frameworks of constitutions (in Hardt and Reyes, 2012, p.183).

Nevertheless, *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* is considered a key pillar of the pluri-national states in Bolivia and Ecuador, found in the Constitutions⁴ and, for example, National Development Plans. However, researchers found that in practice *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* has been 'discursively influential and yet conceptually reduced and unevenly applied' (Zimmerer, 2015, p.314). It is argued that *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* clashes with extractivism, underpinned by constitutionally guaranteed rights of the state 'to extract and commercialise natural resources (mainly hydrocarbons and mining) under the banner of redistributive justice, welfare reforms and the common good' (Lalander, 2017, p.464). When these clash, the latter would come up on top:

Ecuador and Bolivia continue to pursue an extractivist economic development model, with assertions of national sovereignty over natural resources tending to prevail over Earth jurisprudence and environmental conservation (Humphreys, 2017, p.459).

Looking at Ecuador, Nicholls finds that the 'modernizing neo-developmentalism' of Correa's government 'is largely defined by many elements of the development discourse, which the Ecuadorian

³ In Ecuador, it is '*Buen Vivir*', translating of the Quechua expression '*sumak kawsay*', while in Bolivia, '*Vivir Bien*' draws on the Aymara notion of '*suma qamaña*'. These translation only partially grasp the holistic concepts describing both, vision and social practice (Widenhorn, 2013, p.382).

⁴ See Preamble and Articles 8, 306 and 313 CPE (Bolivia); Preamble and several articles from the Ecuadorian Constitution.

Constitution nominally rejects' (Nicholls, cited by Clark, 2017, p.355). For Lalander, Correa's government is pragmatic when 'the rights of nature risk [are] subordinated to other human values amidst strategic State interests in economic development and social programs' (Lalander, 2016, p.623). In a similar vein, 'deep contradictions between the constitutional prescriptions and spirit of buen vivir and recently formulated policies that reveal a pragmatic approach on the part of the government' are identified (Caria and Domínguez, 2016, p.18).

In her analysis of the legislation and fiscal policies, which are crucial for the governance of natural resources in Bolivia, Radhuber finds a 'hierarchy and prioritization of the – de facto highly extractivist – development goals vis-à-vis indigenous rights and that fiscal competences of indigenous groups remain limited, as they have throughout Bolivia's history' (Radhuber, 2012, p.181). Others observe the Bolivian government's inability to reconcile tensions, when arguing that despite

the introduction of the concept into the National Development Plan, the new constitution, and the Law of Mother Earth (...), the government has not overcome the conflict between growth-driven approaches and sustainability (Artaraz and Calestani, 2015, p.216).

Ranta identifies a gap between discourse and practice in Bolivia when arguing that 'despite its transformative potential, the translation of *vivir bien* discourses into state practices has not been, to a large degree, achieved' (Ranta, 2016, p.425). Elsewhere, she claims that 'while discursively grounded on such egalitarian principles as reciprocity and rotating authority, its implementation entails bureaucratic propensities to centralise power and authority' (Ranta, 2017, p.1603). When looking at a potentially different South–South cooperation in the 21st century, Gudynas, finds that paradoxically the contemporary focus in such cooperation reinforces conventional varieties of development – hence 'it is blocking alternatives, even the Southern option of Buen Vivir' (Gudynas, 2016, p.721).

Plural economy

In Bolivia, the notion of 'plural economy' is seen as another key pillar of the pluri-national state experiment, it recognises four different economic forms: state-led, private, social-cooperative and communitarian (Art. 306 II CPE). Communitarian forms of economic organisation are – unlike, for example, private ones – based on communal land ownership and are hence perceived as particularly crucial in resisting 'further commodification and foreign ownership or exploitation of land they hold sacred' (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012, p.8). In the pluri-national state, these different economies should coexist without one being subordinated to another.

However, scholars' findings reveal the severe limits of this in the pluri-national experiment. In this vein, Gustafson and Fabricant (2011) observe continuity in the mode of production, reflected in a sustained subordination of communal to private property. Webber notes that promised structural transformations that should weaken the pluri-nation's dependency on commodity exports, did not

occur (Webber, 2016, p.1862; also, Molero Simarro and Paz Antolín, 2012). For example, in the mining sectors, changes remained at the so-called 'operational level' (Arsel *et al.*, 2014).

The Bolivian hydrocarbon nationalisation is considered 'neoliberal' and not comparable to nationalisations of the 1950s (Kaup, 2010), while the political economy of Morales' government is described as 'reconstituted neoliberalism' (Webber, 2010a). This means that it 'has merely implemented a more politically stable version of the model of accumulation it inherited' (Brabazon and Webber, 2014, p.435), which Vice-President García Linera calls 'Andean-Amazon capitalism' (Lewis, 2013).

Burchardt and Dietz also find that 'the green economy – the economic model promoted in response to the tension between environmental protection and economic development – is still based on raw material extraction' (Burchardt and Dietz, 2014, p.470). Gudynas speaks of a 'brown left' – not being as environmentally friendly as it presents itself (Gudynas, 2012b). Others identify a convergence in the way the 'social democratic neoliberal' and progressive 'self-consciously post-neoliberal' regimes handled mining and hydrocarbon extraction and the related socio-environmental conflicts (Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington, 2011, p.131). The continuation or even expansion of extractivism and agroindustry often directly affects the local population and their local economies. As pointed out in the previous subsection, government priorities were often not to protect the indigenous people and their environmental rights.

Yet, as the widely-used notion of 'neo-extractivism' coined by Gudynas (2009a) indicates, scholars also recognise that some changes took place despite the continued extractivism. Most fundamentally, researchers highlight that the state's role underwent change as it became more involved in the economy, redistribution and social policies and turned into a 'compensatory state' (Gudynas, 2012a). Yet, this does not mean that the state supports the plural economy and different forms of economic organisation: 'instead of reducing the dependency of small producers on agro-industrial capital, the Bolivian state has increased it' (Cordoba and Jansen, 2014, p.480; see also, Kwon Mun, 2015). Andreucci and Radhuber (2015) find that the Bolivian state has been crucial in 'weakening social resistance to mining expansion, by demobilising those social forces whose proposals and demands conflicted most clearly with extractivist development'.

Indigenous autonomies

As argued earlier, peoples' self-determination is key in the pluri-national state and therefore it is not surprising that the new constitutionally-recognised⁵ indigenous autonomies in Bolivia attracted the

⁵ See Art. 289-296 CPE (Bolivia).

attention of researchers. Tockman and Cameron demonstrate how CPE and legislation seem 'to support indigenous autonomy while simultaneously constraining it' (Tockman and Cameron, 2014, p.46). For them, this highlights the contradiction between the pluri-national experiment and two key aspects of the MAS' strategy: first, the promotion of the development model based on resource-extraction and secondly, its attempt to control political space (ibid.) (see also Tockman *et al.*, 2015; Tockman, 2016, 2017a; Alderman, 2016). For Powęska, it is 'the character of state' that presents the key obstacle in the implementation of indigenous self-determination (Powęska, 2017, p.442).

Holst (2016) highlights that one needs to discuss not just political, but also educational and economic autonomy, which are severely limited despite the state-recognised autonomies. Only by broadening the notion of autonomy, could one speak of an environment in which indigenous peoples can 'maintain the trajectory of their development alternative free of center-periphery dependencies' (Silva, 2016, p.15). Yet, as already pointed out in the previous subsections, despite the expansion of such ethno-territorial rights, that are protected by the new CPE, these remain frequently subordinated to economic interests (Kröger and Lalander, 2016). While in the pluri-national state the recognition of collective rights is key, in Bolivia, during 'Morales' presidency, class-based human rights in practice tend to be superior to the ethnically defined rights' (Lalander, 2017, p.464).

Legal pluralism

Another crucial aspect of the pluri-national idea, which is recognised in the pluri-national constitutions (Art. 190-192 CPE (Bolivia), Art. 171 Ecuadorian Constitution), is the recognition of the practice of indigenous community justice on an equal footing with the ordinary justice system. This expresses 'a legitimate assertion by the country's indigenous peoples of their cultural integrity' (Hammond, 2011, p.649). Indigenous jurisdiction differs from national ordinary justice systems and the human rights regime, as it has, for example, an oral tradition, which clashes with the modern vision of written law that can be universally applied (Strack, 2014). Yet, also here expectation has so far not been met. Barrera finds that

[w]hile the new frameworks [in Bolivia and Ecuador] constitute remarkable progress, their effects in the longer term will depend on the broader political context and the willingness to alter the long-established attitudes of justice operators and broader societies alike (Barrera, 2011, p.1).

In Ecuador, Simon Thomas finds that recognised legal pluralism can empower or disempower indigenous authorities: 'While it has encouraged local authorities to extend their jurisdiction, formalized legal pluralism has also led to national political tensions over the exact interpretation of relevant articles in the constitution and attempts to limit indigenous jurisdiction.' (Simon Thomas,

2017, p.46). For Strack (2014), national policy-makers and policy-making obstructed drastic reform in Bolivia.

Representation and indigenous participation

Another crucial element of a pluri-national state is the inclusion of all peoples in decision-making of matters that concern them. Rice (2016) highlights that the inclusion of new direct, participatory and communitarian aspects into the democratic system, has overall improved and strengthened representation for and of indigenous peoples in Bolivia.

Looking at the representation in the state, in this case, seats in parliament, Htun and Ossa (2013) point out that while there has been progress in gender parity, empowerment has also produced new hierarchies within the indigenous movement. More generally, scholars find that mainly the Aymara and Quechua peoples are represented, while other minority groups remain marginalised (Albro, 2010; Postero, 2010). For Canessa, 'there is a tendency to prefer some indigenous identities over others as well as to homogenize the experience of being indigenous' (Canessa, 2016, p.75). Nevertheless, ethnic identification is not fixed, and changes, according to Flesken (2013), with altering political discourses.

The implementation of the constitutionally guaranteed right to free, prior and informed consultation⁶ is marked by important shortcomings, since these consultations are 'not neutral or a political exercise that automatically improves democratic governance' (Fontana and Grugel, 2016, p.249). The way in which this is handled in Bolivia is

in tension with broader ideas of representation and legitimacy, inclusiveness, and management of public and common goods because there is no real clarity as to who is entitled to participation, why they do, and whether they are doing so as a corrective to exclusion, a promotion of citizenship, or as a mechanism for redistribution (ibid.).

Schilling-Vacaflor, pointing to similar deficiencies in the processes, argues that this reveals that in the pluri-national state, 'local ideas of self-determined development remain subordinated to prioritized extractive industries' (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2013, p.202).

Intercultural education

Another crucial point on pluri-national states' agenda is education – in Ecuador's Constitution, education is 'intercultural, democratic, inclusive and diverse' (Art. 26), Article 30 of the Bolivian CPE grants the indigenous *pueblos* the right to 'inter-cultural, intra-cultural and pluri-lingual education'. The aspired reforms re-imagine education as oriented towards social justice and 'based on recognition and inclusion rather than an expulsion of indigenous values, knowledges and languages' (Lopes

⁶ Art. 403 I CPE (Bolivia); Art. 57 No 7 Ecuadorian Constitution.

Cardozo, 2012). Yet, Howard finds that paradoxically under the first Bolivian government headed by someone with an indigenous face

for the first time in the country's history, education policy appears to be on the verge of moving in a direction that does not, at least at first appearances, take account of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the recipient populations (Howard, 2009).

At the same time, the education reform process has been far from quick – also due to the objections from the 'powerful, militant urban teachers' union' (Farthing and Kohl, 2014, p.105). For example, for Lopes Cardozo (2012), it is clear that it is still a long way from eradicating 'the deep structures of indigenous denial in Bolivian education and society'. Hence, also here, high expectations have so far not been met.

Summing-up: The Janus-faced Pluri-national State of Bolivia - How to make sense of the gap?

The literature reviewed in the previous subsections confirms Centellas' assessment that overall, 'celebratory narratives of (...) the possibility of a new social revolution have, after nearly a decade, given way to scholarly skepticism' (Centellas, 2015, p.240). Often, a dissonance is identified between pluri-national ideals, government rhetoric as well as constitutional and legal frameworks on the one side and government policies and practices on the other. Many researchers point to contradictions and/or tensions within the pluri-national scenario, firstly between environmental and cultural sustainability or indigenous-friendliness, and, secondly, economic development or extractivism (Holst, 2016). In other words, Bolivia and Ecuador often appear as Janus-faced states with one indigenous-friendly and one extractivist face. When these faces clash, it is the latter that prevails. Yet, also with regard to the indigenous-friendly face, it appears questionable how far this lives up to the idea of the *different* pluri-national state.

1.2. Identifying the gap and filling it by rethinking the state

Despite the widespread description and recognition of these tensions in the pluri-national state, the focus of enquiry has usually not been the state as a category and its pluri-national specificity. Some authors more implicitly offer explanations for the contradictions. A common argument relates to 'structural constraints'. Centellas points out that

Morales and his MAS party have had to maneuver within domestic and international contexts that (...) also imposed constraints that help explain why Bolivian policies remain generally consistent with those of previous governments (Centellas, 2015, p.230).

Silva offers a different take on it, emphasising 'competing interests (...) between the government and social movements as they confront the challenges of constructing a postneoliberal order' (Silva, 2016, p.17). Yet, other scholars found internal discrepancies in the government programme. In Bolivia, 'the political project of refounding the State that the Morales administration has carried out (...) has

adopted an internal tension between national-popular and popular-indigenous elements' (Baker, 2015a, p.283).

This thesis suggests that looking more closely at the category of the state helps to make sense of the described tensions and contradictory tendencies as part of a bigger picture. Unlike the seesaw of different political regimes or varying development models, the (nation) state has existed in Latin America for around two centuries. To investigate if and how (far) the pluri-national state is pluri-national, it is necessary to move beyond the political regime and the model of development.

Scholars widely acknowledge the state's centrality, turning it into a key concept in the social sciences (Heywood, 2000) that is often seen as the most important or powerful formal institution of communal organisation (Gunn, 1994; Faulks, 2000) or the single most important locus where political, economic and social power relations are brought together (Boron, 2001). Academics have assigned varying – depending on the vocabulary used – elements, roles, functions, characteristics, attributes, among others, to the state. While in pluralist approaches, the state is seen as a 'neutral umpire to the freely articulated demands of a pluralist society' (Martin, 2008, p.12), this assumed neutrality of the state is rejected by more critical accounts, including by those who demanded a *different* state and – in the social sciences most prominently – those that follow a Marxist line of thought.

Silva's account demonstrates the importance of addressing the category of the state in the pluri-national experiments. She finds that to achieve the *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien*, a backbone of the pluri-national state, the state has to be rationalised and modernised, meaning putting an end to 'administrative irrationalities and corporatist interests' (Silva, 2016, p.8). Yet, speaking of the state's modernisation and rationalisation does not sound like a *different* state but is a reminder of the second wave of neoliberal reforms. As such, it appears to be in tension with the pluri-national idea and the entwined agenda of decolonising the state.

In this thesis, I therefore seek to critically rethink how to approach the state theoretically and methodologically. The brief literature review indicated that these expectations of the imagined *different* state were not met. Nevertheless, for understanding continuity and change as well as contradictory tendencies in the pluri-national experiments, I suggest that it is important to unpack and approach the pluri-national state in a way that can engage with the apparent discrepancies and its normative specificity.

1.3. Taking the pluri-national specificity more seriously by looking at self-determination/autonomy

As some of the aforementioned authors recognise, the pluri-national idea is closely tied to the self-determination/autonomy of peoples. Key promoters of this notion even argue that a pluri-national

state cannot be understood without self-determination/autonomy (AA.VV., 2011). Despite being often interchangeably used terms, self-determination and autonomy are contested concepts with different origins and meanings. Self-determination of a people is a peremptory norm (*jus cogens*) in modern international public law, that denotes people's (legal) right to choose their destiny within the international order. First formulated in the 19th century, it was enshrined in the 1945 UN Charter as a foundation for the relation between (modern) states (Art. 1, 2, 55). It became particularly important with the UN General Assembly Resolution 1541 (1960), which was enacted in the context of the formal decolonisation of Africa. In this, it was stated that to ensure decolonisation, it is required to completely comply with the principle of self-determination.

Since then, self-determination has been revoked for and by indigenous peoples, who are a minority in the states they inhabit leaving them unable to determine their destinies. In Bolivia, small groups, most of whom live in the lowlands, asked – usually the state directly – for such protection, that would allow them the freedom to preserve their way of life and cultural heritage. As I show later in the thesis, this has been a key impetus of their struggles leading to the pluri-national state.

Yet, since the pluri-national state idea goes beyond the existing state and, for example, challenges modern law, the notion of autonomy appears to be even more relevant. Autonomy is a broader, more open concept and is used to refer to the capacity for self-determination and self-governance of an individual or a collective. While often seen as going back to Kantian moral philosophy⁷ (Hill, 1989), autonomy has also been discussed uncoupled from morality. When groups demand autonomy, this generally expresses 'a deep desire to expand collective capacity for self government' (Chatterton, 2010, p.899).

Yet, the variety of movements and practices that are labeled as autonomous makes it hard to define what autonomy and self-government actually refers to and implies (Böhm *et al.*, 2010, p.20). In the Spanish language, autonomy also refers to a model of state organisation, in which some entities of the (nation) state have considerable political and economic-financial leverage vis-à-vis the central state (Real Academia Española, n.d.). Regional movements might demand (more) autonomy from the central state (government). In addition, 'conservative autonomy movements' might try to defend their benefits from the status-quo when 'under attack at the national level' (Eaton, 2011, p.291).

The Zapatistas' uprising erupting in 1994, triggered shifts in debates on autonomy, since with this event, 'a tradition of resistance has been transformed into a project of liberation' (Esteva and Pérez, 2001). This facilitated discussion about autonomy at the ontological level, as the Zapatistas challenged

⁷ In a nutshell, it is about the capacity to think over and give oneself moral law instead of following injunctions of others.

the universe that is presumed in modern ontology by opting for a *pluriverse*, that is 'a world where many worlds fit' (Escobar, 2011, p.139). With autonomy one can then refer to a '*different way of imagining life*, to an other mode of existence' (ibid., italics in the original). Autonomy is then the 'art of organising hope', in and through which new worlds are pre-figured (Dinerstein, 2015, p.9). For indigenous people this implies that they relate to Mother Earth, community, and development in ways that are alien to the modern/Western universe.

As in the case of the Zapatistas, in most indigenous struggles, demands for autonomy do not just refer to an emancipatory project. For those involved, 'emancipation is inevitably a decolonising project' directed not just against capital and the state but also against coloniality (Dinerstein, 2015, p.13). It is therefore not primarily about taking state power or similar, but about alternatives forms of politics (ibid.) and *another* state (Quijano, 2006). Only with an *other* state, is it possible to overcome the 'inclusion-exclusion paradox', meaning that indigenous peoples have so-far 'either been included into the logic of the liberal capitalist state or excluded from it' (Merino, 2017, p.139). The pluri-national state idea refers precisely to this *different* state.

Despite the outlined differences between the meaning of autonomy in non-indigenous and indigenous struggles, autonomy is always 'first of all creative and contradictory practice' (Dinerstein, 2015, p.9). Since neither indigenous nor non-indigenous people, who demand autonomy, are outside the state and capital, their struggles are marked by constant frictions between institutionalisation, for example, into the state agenda, and rebellion. There are always 'contradictory dynamics between the pendulum movement of integration and transcendence, negativity and positivity' (Böhm *et al.*, 2010).

The pluri-national state idea and real experiments provide an excellent context to see how such paradoxes and the described differences between non-indigenous and indigenous struggles for autonomy, which have not received much attention in the wider debates on autonomy, have played out in practice. At the same time, since self-determination/autonomy lies at the heart of the pluri-national state idea, it provides a promising entry point for studying how far the de jure pluri-national state is (not) a de facto pluri-national state. This is because this entry point incorporates the ideas of a *different* state, while enabling us to see how the transformation of the state towards the desired *other* state has and has not unfolded.

1.4. Research aim, objectives and questions

The aim of this thesis is to rethink the state in the context of the emerging Pluri-national State of Bolivia and to offer a perspective that helps to make sense of the contradictions identified by a substantial number of researchers while also incorporating the specificity of the pluri-national idea. This can be broken down into four sub-aims, which can also be described as objectives.

The first objective is finding an approach to the state, which can grasp its evolving, contradictory character and is sensitive to the specificity of the pluri-national idea.

- ❖ *Research question 1a: How has the state been approached in recent studies on Latin America in general and on Bolivia in particular?*

In this thesis, I bring in the notions of 'form' and 'mediation in motion', drawing on contributions from the CSE and Open Marxism. I scrutinise how far this can help to address concerns of post- and de-colonial scholars, who point out that Western thinking like Marxism reproduce colonial traits.

- ❖ *Research questions 1b: How far can a notion of 'form'/'mediation in motion' provide an alternative that better reflects the state's evolving and contradictory character? Does the notion need to be decolonised and if so, (how) is this possible?*

The second objective revolves around the implications of the proposed alternative conceptualisation of the state for the research design, in particular when investigating a specific state.

- ❖ *Research question 2: What are methodological implications of understanding the state as a 'form'/'mediation in motion'?*

The third objective is to apply the framework to the analysis of the pluri-national state in Bolivia.

- ❖ *Research question 3: What light does state theorisation, based on the idea of 'form' and 'mediation in motion', shed on state transformation in Bolivia in general and in particular, how transformational is the introduction of the pluri-national state in Bolivia likely to be?*

To break this down further, the following questions need addressing:

- ❖ *Research question 3a: How far is motion towards the pluri-national modality historically necessary?*
- ❖ *Research question 3b: How (far) has the 'mediation in motion' translated struggles (for autonomy/ies)?*
- ❖ *Research question 3c: What are the implications of this translation for present and future struggles (for autonomy/ies)?*

The final objective is to reflect on the usefulness of the approach developed and employed.

- ❖ *Research question 4: What can the proposed approach to state transformation in Bolivia tell us about the contradictions, capitalist and colonial features in the Latin America state and beyond?*

1.5. Potential contributions and relevance

The theoretical contribution of this thesis lies in linking a CSE/Open Marxist approach to the state with the 'de-colonial option', bringing in the notions of 'form' and 'mediation in motion'. With this, I seek to push towards decolonising the CSE/Open Marxist approach. The pertinence of this undertaking goes beyond Bolivia and the pluri-national state.

Methodologically, this thesis contributes to the CSE/Open Marxist body of literature with the application of form-analysis to offer a critique of coloniality. It provides methodological innovations that operationalise form-analysis into concrete steps that help to unpack the *transformation* of the state. This potentially also adds to de-colonial thought, which is not associated with a specific research design or similar.

At the substantive level, this thesis provides an in-depth analysis of state transformation, thus adding to the literature on Bolivia's political sociology and economy, in particular to the recent contributions on the subjects of the pluri-national state and (state-recognised) autonomy. While most existing research focuses on the MAS government and hardly distinguishes between government, political regime and state, this thesis focusing on the state expands the horizon in a way that incorporates the specificity of the pluri-national idea. Instead of describing the apparent discrepancy between theory and practice or government promises and its actions, this thesis offers a perspective of how and why these contradictions have evolved and coexist. Engaging fully with these tensions is of fundamental importance when seeking to acquire an in-depth understanding of contemporary Bolivia.

1.6. Outline of chapters

The main body of the thesis is organised in four consecutive parts. It starts with the literature review, followed by a chapter on the epistemological-theoretical framework, research methodology and design. This leads to the third part, which is dedicated to the analysis of state transformation in Bolivia and pays close attention to the pluri-national state. Finally, a discussion and a conclusion follow.

Chapter 2 engages with prominent debates and approaches that have sought to capture 21st century Latin America. I review the regime-centred 'New Left(s)', political economy focused 'neo-developmentalism' vis-à-vis 'neo-extractivism', 'post-neoliberalism' and '21st century socialism' and relational approaches. In this, I pay attention to their capacity for elucidating the contradictory tendencies scholars have found in the pluri-national scenarios and if they are able to see the specificity of the pluri-national state idea. I argue that while some offer insights into the present tensions, none of them pays much attention to 'coloniality' and how this links to the state. Hence, they overlook what is specific to the idea of the pluri-national state.

Chapter 3 reviews three sets of approaches, all of which address the colonial aspect. Firstly, I review Latin American Marxists. Not paying much attention to the state as a category and/or lacking an understanding of the specificity of indigenous struggles, they are incapable of grasping the pluri-national idea. I then look at the 'de-colonial option', which emphasises the state's colonial colouring, making it stronger in unpacking the colonial aspect and the indigenous specificity and pluri-national idea. Finally, I engage with approaches from the Bolivian *comuna* scholars. These are strong in

addressing state crisis at colonial and capitalist levels, but do not offer a consistent approach to the state. In particular in recent years, their debates are highly politicised.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to epistemological-theoretical framework, methodological approach and research design proposed in this thesis. I engage with post-colonial criticism on the applicability of Western thought to the non-West and suggest that the Open Marxist notion of 'form' offers a way to take these concerns seriously, while not leading to thinking the world in binary terms. After introducing the evolution of the notion of 'form' and explaining the CSE/Open Marxist take on it, I stretch the approach by using de-colonial ideas, seeking to better grasp the specificity of the pluri-national state idea and to push towards decolonising the CSE/Open Marxist approach. I then discuss the scope of the form-analysis to show how this study relies on the triangulation of a range of primary and secondary data and methods of analysis. Finally, I address ethical concerns.

Chapter 5 situates the pluri-national state in its historical context. I analyse the emergence and development of the Bolivian state form through different political modalities. I show how the state is a result of, and subject to, domestic struggles and external pressures. In this, I particularly look at the discrepancies and the role these played in the development of the form.

The next three chapters look more closely at the pluri-national modality, using autonomy as the entry point, as it lies at the heart of the pluri-national state idea and also distinguishes it from other types of state. Chapter 6 offers an analysis of how the struggles for autonomy were mediated by the previous political modalities and one another and how they became translated into the 2009 Constitution. Chapter 7 and 8 examine how the struggles were translated by and in the pluri-national modality. While Chapter 7 pays close attention to the central state, Chapter 8 focuses on the advancement of the autonomy regime beyond the central state and the re-direction of struggles.

In the following discussion, found in Chapter 9, I return to crucial aspects of the debates in the literature review and re-engage with these in view of the analysis conducted. It is organised around five themes, most of which refer to a body of literature. In Chapter 10, I recapitulate the research objectives, summarise the main findings of the study, point to the major contributions, acknowledge the study's limitations and develop an agenda for future research.

Chapter 2. Approaching state transformation in contemporary Latin America

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores how researchers have usually treated the category of the state when writing on early 21st century Latin America. Since it is beyond the scope of this chapter to include all accounts, I focus on those approaches which have been most dominant and influential in social scientific debates. When reviewing them, I ask how far these serve to make sense of the present scenario, which researchers found to be full of tensions, as well as the specificity of the pluri-national state idea.

2.2. New left regimes

With the political openings of the 1980s in Latin America paralleling the end of the Cold War, democracy became the central reference point in debates around political regimes, and 'gained the status of a mantra' (Coppedge *et al.*, 2011, p.247). Initially, the main concern was the transition to democracy (O'Donnell *et al.*, 1986; Malloy and Seligson, 1987; Linz, 1990; Huntington, 1991) and with formal democratisation, the emphasis shifted to its consolidation (Mainwaring *et al.*, 1992; Tulchin and Romero, 1995). The main question was no longer if democracy could survive, 'but whether it [could] become a meaningful way for diverse sectors of the populace to exercise collective control over the public decisions that affect their lives' (Roberts, 1998, p.2). Anti-democratic structures and processes, remaining in place despite formal democracy moved to the centre of attention⁸. Institutions and their quality became a crucial concern in social sciences and key international organisations pushed a 'good governance' agenda. In this, little attention was paid to the rising exasperation on the continent, which also reflected the developing 'crisis of representation' of the masses, which is crucial for understanding the 'left turn' (Mainwaring, 2006; Luna, 2010).

In the 'left turn', leaders assumed state power, who scholars placed on the left of the ideological spectrum. With this, the attention shifted towards the new regimes, how they governed and what this meant for democracy. Castañeda (2006) pioneered the dichotomy of bad versus good new left⁹ – that is, the radical populist versus the social democratic left. In this, he reproduces 'the old cleavage between revolution and reform' (Beasley-Murray *et al.*, 2009, p.324). Whilst the good ones have learnt from the past and moderated, the others remain based on 'good old-fashioned populism' (Castañeda, 2006, p.33).

⁸ Concepts like 'exclusionary democracy' (Remmer, 1985) and 'delegative democracy' (O'Donnell, 1993) were coined.

⁹ It is the 'new left' since it differed from 'communist' and 'populist' old left (Castañeda, 2006).

Castañeda's highly normative dichotomy was criticised for various reasons, for example, for lacking clear definitions of concepts like populism, left and social democracy, and for allocating cases to the categories on the basis of a blurry mix of rhetoric, attitude and policies (Madrid, 2010; Ellner, 2012). Other critics point out that it is highly problematic to neglect social movements and extra-institutional space (Ciccariello-Maher, 2013, p.228). Partly responding to this criticism, scholars have offered alternative explanations for the rise of the two lefts, focusing on institutions (Schamis, 2006), factor endowments (Weyland, 2009) and historical origins and timing (Madrid, 2010). Despite partly adopting a different terminology, the groupings remain largely unchanged and so, they seem to take the two lefts for granted (Ellner, 2012, p.112).

With regards to democracy findings are mixed. On the one hand, for example, the volume of Huber and Stephens (2012) shows how leftist governments account for a positive change. In this, the emphasis is often on new social policies and enhanced mechanisms for participation. On the other hand, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán identify in Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela a democratic erosion – other new left cases are classified as stable democracies (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, 2015, p.114). For them,

erosions occurred where presidents with hegemonic ambitions confronted poorly institutionalized party systems and ultimately gained control over weak state institutions, including pliant courts and low-capacity agencies unable to check the executive (ibid.).

Castañeda himself predicted in 2006 that President Morales would 'make news, but not history' if Washington 'played its cards right' (Fuentes, 2014, p.103). Yet, given the establishment of the pluri-national state and Morales' 2010 and 2014 re-elections, Castañeda seemingly overestimated the US influence and underestimated the Bolivian electorate. When focusing on the regime, 'the economic, social and even political changes augured by leftist electoral victories are [seen as] superficial, transient and reversible' (Hunt, 2016, p.440). Does it do justice to the pluri-national state idea to think that the experiments can simply be undone?

Motta (2006) makes a key point when claiming that Panizza (2005) fails to understand the 'nature' of Latin America's left and remains trapped within existing thought frameworks. As in earlier contributions on democratisation and institutional quality, the state is treated as having little conceptual ambiguity, usually implying a pluralist-liberal and normative notion of the state following which it should be a referee of society, steered by the democratic government (Heywood, 2013). If the state does not fulfil this role, it is a failure of institutions, leadership or governance and not of the state itself. Most observers assume that leftist movements, parties and governments 'share a common commitment to egalitarianism; a willingness to use the state to balance market forces; and a belief in the importance of popular participation' (Cameron, 2009, p.332).

It is highly problematic to interpret the reality of Latin American leftist forces if one assumes the state as a key 'focus of political power and democracy; political parties (more centrally elites) as privileged agents of structural change; and the nation state as the spatial limit of political agency and analysis' (Motta, 2006, p.899). With these assumptions, the failure to fully grasp possibilities for, and address obstacles to, social change is likely. In the Bolivian case, it is not the new government that initiated a revolution, but 'it was a revolution that brought about the government of Evo Morales' (Hylton and Sinclair, 2007, p.17).

Instead of coining new concepts, which seek to grasp the regime-democracy nexus, a more critical engagement with the nature of structures, and primarily the state, and how they are conceptualised, is crucial. Otherwise, neither the contradictions in the pluri-national scenarios nor the specificity of the pluri-national state idea are fully grasped.

2.3. The thesis of a 'strong(er) state', or neo-developmentalism vs. neo-extractivism

This second set of approaches stresses the political economy in transforming Latin America. In 2005, Coatsworth observed 'the renewal of interest in the Big Questions that inspired the structuralists, "*cepalinos*", Marxists, *dependentistas*, and modernizationists of the post-World War II generations' (Coatsworth, 2005, p.126). As he predicted, alternatives to neoliberalism were ambitiously debated over the past decade and a similar divide as the one between reformist and radical *dependistas* emerged (see also 3.2.3.). This divide, reflected in the notions of neo-developmentalism and neo-extractivism, is not only relevant for understanding divergent visions on transformation and alternative paths, but also shows contrasting perspectives on the state. Notwithstanding, over time (neo-)developmentalism and (neo-)extractivism have increasingly been employed 'rather loosely to describe current economic policies' (North and Grinspun, 2016, p.483).

The reformists advocate the revival of ideas on state developmentalism and the developmental state. This perspective, which gained prominence during the economic crises in the late 1990s, became particularly relevant after the 'left turn'. It was especially important in Brazil and Argentina, where the Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) policies led to some positive results in industrialisation and development. Yet, also the new Bolivian, Ecuadoran and Venezuelan Constitutions 'reintroduce the state as protagonist capable of intervening in the economic arena' (Reyes, 2012, p.9). Overall, the pink idea is often associated with 'an increasing role for the state in development' (Wylde, 2012, p.187).

For key promoters, neo-developmentalism refers to a 'national development strategy that middle income countries are today using or should use to promote development and economic catching up' (São Paulo School of Economics of Getulio Vargas Foundation, 2010). It is an attempt to 'define an alternative to the Washington Consensus orthodoxy' (Ban, 2013, p.300) and draws on 'old-style Latin

American developmentalism' (Bresser-Pereira, 2006). Yet, it is new in that lessons were drawn from earlier shortcomings as well as the experience of the Asian tiger states and it also responds to the globalised international sphere (ibid., 2011). In this 'comeback of the state' (Ban, 2013), it needs to be a 'capable state' that forms alliances with business, creates investment opportunities and reduces inequality, but does not take the lead in making investments as under developmentalism (Bresser-Pereira, 2011). Similarly in 20th century developmentalism, the state is seen as a means to achieve development.

Recent research on Brazil indicates that within and despite the neo-developmental agenda, contemporary governance remains largely driven by a dominant power bloc headed by the national and international bourgeoisie with competing interests (Boito and Saad-Filho, 2016). Due to elements of a 'search for progressive policy alternatives arising out of the many contradictions of neoliberalism' (Macdonald and Rückert, 2009, p.6), authors speak of a hybrid neoliberal-neo-developmental model (Boito and Saad-Filho, 2016). Analysing Argentina, Féliz concludes that

[w]hile it has been able to bring back economic growth, the development of its inner contradictions is creating growing barriers to the possibility of further expansion within the same project of development, particularly as the world economy enters into crisis (Féliz, 2015, p.70).

These findings do not come as a surprise, given some questionable assumptions made by neo-developmentalists. Chibber (1999) calls the East Asian miracle that is used as reference point into question, since it can be hardly be reduced to a strong state. At the same time, a key problem with the approach is the underlying naïve conceptualisation of the state: The state, represented principally by the government, also the key actor in political economy, is seen as 'capable of constituting and leading the nation as a "collective actor", and consequently guiding it onto a virtuous economic path' (Ebenau, 2014, p.107). Such 'statolatry' (that is, state idolatry) assigns all-embracing and in-depth organisational competence to the state (Boris, 2014, pp.182-3). It is assumed that the state can act relatively detached from individual or class interests, and has the capacity to implement reforms (ibid., p.150). While an alliance of state and business is seen as key in this strategy, the collaboration between policy makers and capitalists has not been as straightforward as stated in cheery accounts of developmentalism (Chibber, 2009, pp.163-4).

In neo-developmentalism, the state is perceived as a 'thing' that is outside or peripheral to the relations of production, and autonomous from individual and class interests. In this, they miss one of the key contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, when

envisioning of transnational economic competition as a positive-sum game which promises gains for all sorts of firms and countries, whatever their initial position, if only they tackle the task of competitive insertion in the 'right' way (Ebenau, 2014, p.106).

This masks that the universal struggle for shares of the global market, has historically produced structural unemployment and excess capacities in many productive sectors, related to the tendency towards over-accumulation on a global level (ibid.). The assumption that capital has a national orientation is questionable given its universalising tendency, which allows and even promotes varying dynamics (Chibber, 2013, pp.101-103). Boron (2010) emphasises the impossibility of catching-up in capitalism – a strategy like neo-developmentalism would only preserve the status-quo.

Apart from this, neo-developmentalism is incapable of seeing the specificity of the pluri-national state idea. As Clark finds, the neo-developmental agenda adopted by the Correa government is incompatible with the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution (Clark, 2017, p.355). Neo-developmentalism does not offer a conceptual tool for unpacking this incompatibility and how the tensions play out in practice.

On the other side of the divide, closer to the radical *dependista* strand, the work of Gudynas, already mentioned in 1.1., is a key reference point. With 'neo-extractivism', he offers a critique to 'neo-developmentalism', which would implicitly support a continued subordination to the world market (Gudynas, 2009a). It means no other than 'new policies which strengthen the role of the state in the exploitation and ownership of resources' that do not address economic structures and its inherent risks and ills (Gutiérrez Aguilar, 2012, p.7).

In comparison to the regime-centred approaches (see last subsection), less attention is paid to the willingness of the progressive governments. Instead, these scholars look at the global/international capitalist system to explain the lack of 'a dramatic shift towards a new economic model but rather a pragmatic way for centre-left governments to better capture capitalist surplus in the exploitation of natural resources' (Kennemore and Weeks, 2011, p.12). Then, the interdependence of Latin America and the wider international market has helped and continues to sustain the regions' underdevelopment (Kay, 2010). Thus, despite neo-developmental efforts or social programmes, the pink tide governments did 'little more than perpetuate the colonial state and the neoliberal consensus, dressing it up with the trappings of socialism' (Hunt, 2016, p.440).

As in the earlier *dependista* debate, the radical strand rejects the idea that the state can help overcome dependency (Namkoong, 1999). State reform can be mostly understood in terms of the external constraints arising from dependent, unequal relationships between centre and periphery (Holloway, 1994, p.26). For example, for Wallerstein, since the 16th century, the one world system, 'a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems', has been the model of the capitalist world economy under leading industries and countries (Wallerstein, 1974, p.390). Furthermore, 'the "world-economy" contains political structures and state' and hence strategies to overcome dependency at the national level can only reproduce capitalism (Wallerstein, 1982, p.13).

The 'neo-extractivist' angle is more promising for understanding the disappointed hopes associated with the pink tide and the pluri-national state experiments than neo-developmentalism. For example, it offers an explanation for why current cooperation between states in the South does not go beyond traditional varieties of development, but 'paradoxically' blocks alternatives such the *Buen Vivir* (Gudynas, 2016).

Nevertheless, there is an important shortcoming when it comes to theorising and conceptualising the state that points to the closeness of the overly structural account. Even though the basic exploitative relations take place at the global level, their conditions are nationally established (Thwaites Rey, 2010, p.10). The neo-extractivist angle falls short in explaining the response to different domestic struggles: With regards to Gudynas' compensatory state (2012a), one can ask why the state legitimises continued extractivism in the way it does, why the pluri-national state emerged and how the idea differs from other states. This indicates this radical perspective lacks a strong concept, capable of capturing the dynamic mediation of global and domestic spheres. Yet, such concept is indispensable for grasping the pluri-national state idea and the tensions identified by various scholars (see 1.1.).

2.4. The state in post-neoliberal times or a post-neoliberal state?

Besides the 'new left' categorisations, 'neo-developmentalism' and 'neo-extractivism', 'post-neoliberalism' has emerged as another tool for capturing the changes in 21st century Latin America. Since Bolivia and Ecuador have been significantly discussed under this banner, it needs to be seen how far this set of lenses can make sense of the contradictory pluri-national scenario and the specificity of the pluri-national idea. Underpinned by Polanyi's 'Grand Transformation', the proponents of the concept see the new governments as a reaction against the extreme neoliberalisation and the accompanying technocratic, elitist democracies of the 1990s – it is a counter-movement of the type Polanyi (1944) described. In this, the notion of 'double movement' of market and the state's corrective action is emphasised (Silva, 2009).

Post-neoliberalism is seen as a call for a new alternative social contract between state and society (Wylde, 2012, p.436), that concerns the 'construction of social consensus' (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012, pp.4-5). In this, the changed role of the state is emphasised:

The recent history of the leftist movements in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador relates to the failures of the neoliberal reforms applied (...), hence the dismantling of core orthodox policies has been critical for them once in power. This has been possible through the expansion of state action in the economy (Rosales, 2013, p.1443).

For other scholars, post-neoliberalism entails a 'strong' state (Radcliffe, 2012), a more 'active state' (Macdonald and Rückert, 2009, p.3), or a 'return of the state' (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012, p.1) compared to neoliberal times, associated with a 'shrinking state' (Lomnitz, 2006).

However, this idea of the changed state can be criticised for different reasons. First, neoliberalism cannot be associated with a weakening/ed state, as it is 'the role of the state (...) to create and preserve the institutional framework appropriate to such practices' (Harvey, 2005, p.1). Neo-Gramscians claim that the state was not weakened, but that its role was restructured (Bieler and Morton, 2006, p.198). Secondly, the left turn was initiated by the sudden ingress of voices and actions of those, who had not been perceived as part of society, or at least not part of the civil or political sector of society (Vega Camacho, 2014, p.172). The shift of the political is hence no return, but a result of the power, which can change and renew collective conditions of action and its expression (ibid.).

In this, a key problem is that neoliberalism, the main reference point, is 'an oft-invoked, but ill-defined concept'¹⁰ (Mudge, 2008, p.703). Since neoliberalism is too broad as a 'descriptor for what is in fact a sequenced, fragmented and politically indeterminate process' (Molyneux, 2008, p.775), it is questionable if it is a promising starting point for a new concept. Additionally, scholars disagree on the relationship between neoliberalism and post-neoliberalism. In Brand and Sekler (2009) and Sader (2009, p.174), for example, a clear break between the neoliberalism and post-neoliberalism is envisioned, while Grugel and Riggirozzi state that, even though the pre-fix appears to signal something different from neoliberalism, this contrast 'should not be drawn too starkly' (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012, p.6). Similarly, Macdonald and Rückert highlight that 'post-neoliberalism should not be understood as an era after neoliberalism' (Macdonald and Rückert, 2009, p.6).

Adding to the lack of definitional clarity, Bebbington and Humphreys Bebbington (2011) note that the concept should be treated with caution as the self-proclaimed post-neoliberal governments might not be as post-neoliberal as they claim. So far, '[d]ebates about postneoliberalism-as-governance or as a discourse lack resolution' (Ettliger and Hartmann, 2015, p.37).

Seeking to move beyond these debates, one suggestion is to use post-neoliberalism as

as an umbrella to explore various concepts [including] regime change, the role of the state, the retrenchment of neoliberalism through neoliberal governance, agency and class relations, and the potential for the sustainability of these changes (Cockburn, 2014, p.158).

However, this has little potential to overcome the aforementioned challenges such as lacking clarity. Instead of opening up the category, Marston (2015) proposes, following Yates and Bakker (2013), to distinguish between post-neoliberalism as a utopian-ideological project (the *after* neoliberalism), which is found in academic and political discourse, and post-neoliberalism 'as a set of on-the-ground

¹⁰ Steger and Roy (2010) signal that neoliberalism is sometimes understood as a set of policies, an ideology or a mode of production.

processes and practices', including policies, shifts in state intervention and institutional reform (Yates and Bakker, 2013, p.64).

Another way forward is offered by de Freitas *et al.*, who see the need to 'underscore the ambiguity of both putatively neoliberal modes of resource governance and their post-neoliberal alternatives' (de Freitas *et al.*, 2015, p.239). Coining the concept 'not-quite-neoliberal', they signal

both our appreciation of and reservations about theoretical elaborations of neoliberalism, post-neoliberalism, and (post-)neoliberal natures in relation to the wide variety of reforms currently transforming resource governance in Latin America (ibid.).

In a similar vein, others elaborate on the 'paradoxical nature of actually-existing post-neoliberalism' (Wilson and Bayón, 2017, p.55).

While such approaches offer lenses that make the contradictions in the pluri-national scenarios visible, it appears questionable if they provide the conceptual tools to profoundly make sense of them as evolving processes. Instead of continuing to debate the meaning of the fuzzy buzzword post-neoliberalism or coining more appropriate concepts to grasp the current situation, paying closer attention to the category of the state offers a more promising way forward.

In the debates on post-neoliberalism, the state as a category has so far received little attention. Yet, introducing a volume on post-neoliberalism in Brazil, the editors point out that

states are not unitary actors but must be seen as contested spaces marked by internal politics, clashing personalities, competing interests, and different external alliances, permeated by historically embedded institutional cultures and politics (Wolford and French, 2016).

Thinking about the state through post-neoliberal lenses has so far often implied either a liberal or structural vision of the state. The first one is overlapping with the regime-centred and neo-developmental visions of the state as an instrument of government, and, for example, visible in the perspectives on the return of the state with new social policies. When pointing to the limitation of post-neoliberalism in practice, a rather structuralist vision of the state is often employed that overlaps with neo-extractivism. Also, the specificity of the pluri-national idea has not received much attention, since this also requires moving beyond neoliberalism as a reference point.

2.5. Harnecker and 21st century socialism

Another radical perspective on transforming Latin America is associated with the work of Harnecker, a leftist 'long-term political analyst and activist', who advocated '21st century socialism' (Ellner, 2012, p.97). As Althusser's student, in her early work she developed a structuralist account largely reflecting a base-superstructure model of society, in which the state is an instrument of class domination that fulfils two functions, one technical-administrative and another of political domination (Harnecker,

1974, pp.60-62). Following Marx, Engels and Lenin, she points to the necessity of destroying the bourgeois state apparatus and not state power (ibid., pp.63-65). Extinguishing the state becomes only relevant with the proletarian state (ibid., p.75). Hence taking state power lies at the heart of radical change; practice has shown that 'contrary to the theoretical dogmatism of some sectors of the radical left – you can use this inherited state and transform it into an instrument that collaborates with building the new society' (Harnecker, 2017). The inherited state is the basis of a new institutional body and political system.

Yet, in her eyes, transforming the state should not involve the leadership of a vanguard party (Chávez Frías and Harnecker, 2005, p.9). Instead, two things are needed: first, state institutions run by revolutionary cadres, willing to adopt transformative measures of these institutions and secondly, an organized popular movement that is capable of controlling its actions and exercise pressure for transformation (Harnecker, 2017). Distinguishing repressive, technical-administrative and ideological institutions as state apparatus, she is (like Althusser) particularly interested in the latter (Harnecker, 1974, pp.66-69).

Considering this, her closeness to Cuban revolutionary process and involvement in the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution and serving as President Chávez's advisor early on in his presidency, might not come as a surprise. She advocated 21st century socialism, a term coined by Heinz Dieterich, a Mexican leftist and subsequently used as a banner by pink tide presidents. With 21st century socialism, one seeks to tackle problems of inequality and poverty, which neither free-market capitalism nor 20th century socialism addressed. Having learnt from the past, more emphasis is placed on participatory and decentralized planning. Harnecker writes

people involved in the planning process feel dignified, [it] increases their self-esteem and, what's most important, [they] no longer feel like beggars demanding solutions from the state (Harnecker, 2014).

This account has served as an important guide or strategy for recent revolutionary transformations, yet, it offers less insights into how the processes under the progressive governments have evolved. For example, why do we see 'revolutions in the revolutions' (Reyes, 2012)? Perceiving the state as an instrument hardly grasps the contradictory tendencies found in the pluri-national experiments. The state is ultimately treated as separated from and externally related to the economic sphere – but is it? I later challenge this assumption (see 4.3.2.). Additionally, she does not address the specificity of the pluri-national idea and indigenous struggles.

2.6. Relational approaches

Authors like McKay *et al.* (2014), Ettlinger and Hartmann (2015) and Hunt (2016), pointing to limitations in the regime-centre, overly structuralist perspectives and contributions on post-neoliberalism, propose to better use relational approaches for making sense of transforming Latin America. A prominent set of relational approaches that offers a more nuanced take on the state draws on Gramsci, whose ideas have been highly influential for Latin American intellectuals (see 3.2.2.)

Recently, Gramsci's ideas served as reference point for thinking about changing 21st century Latin America in different ways. While some scholars look at the global political economy and, for example, the internationalisation of the state, others focused more on the domestic scenario and the state-society relation. This demonstrates the richness of Gramsci's notion of the state, that is not just restricted to the 'government of functionaries' or 'top political leaders and personalities with direct governmental responsibility' (Gramsci, 1971, p.178). Rather, the state

consists of the entire complex of political and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom they rule (ibid., p.244).

The state has a political society, that is the legal system, police, and army, and a civil society¹¹, which are associated with coercion and consent as modes of domination. Being primarily a surety of an unequal, capitalist social relation, the main objective of the state is preserving the system (Thwaites Rey, 2010, p.15). Key in this is hegemony, which is used to refer to consensual dominance. Following Poulantzas, the state's concrete characteristics stem from socially mediated power relations, a material agglomeration of relations among classes and class factions (Poulantzas, 1978). The state always remains 'relatively autonomous' from the historic power bloc, which is the heterogeneous conglomerate of the different classes whose interests are perpetuated by the state (see 4.3.1.)

2.6.1. Neo-Gramscian thought in International Relations and Global Political Economy

The proponents of Neo-Gramscianism as a theory of International Relations and Global Political Economy often divide history into periods, in which capitalism has certain features. Each period is 'based on (...) a fit between a configuration of material power, the prevalent collective image of world order (...) and a set of institutions which administer the order' (Cox, 1981, p.139). These three elements are present in the spheres of social relations of production, the forms of state and world order. Capitalist crisis occurs in case of arising misfits and it is perceived as a 'crisis of regulation', through which transition from one mode of regulation to another takes place.

¹¹ It is the sphere where ideas and beliefs are shaped and where the state makes concessions to political parties and unions.

The years after the global economic crisis and the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in the early 1970s were characterised by a tendency towards internationalisation of production and the state (Wissen and Brand, 2011). This period of transnational restructuring of the economy was driven by a transnational managerial class. For the new historic power bloc, neoliberalism served as an ideological battering ram to ensure, among other things, the passive subordination of the periphery to the accumulation in the centre (Thwaites Rey, 2010, p.9).

Despite similar Structural Adjustment Programmes and US foreign policy, neoliberal restructuring varied between Latin American states¹². In this, the state was not rolled back – as implied in some of the previously reviewed approaches–, but its role was restructured (Bieler and Morton, 2006, p.198). It increasingly served as a 'transmission belt'¹³ for neoliberalism as the dominant logic of capitalist competition (Cox, 1992, p.31). However, the transnational capitalist class failed to establish (cultural) hegemony largely because it was unable to conceal the contradictions that were arising (Gwynne and Kay, 2000). Despite its emphasis on freedom and democracy, neoliberal policies had in fact tightened the long-existing marginalisation and exclusion of an increasingly large part of the population (Boris, 2014, p.162).

Roughly since 2000, the balance of power has changed in Latin America, and the old historic bloc increasingly crumbled (Thwaites Rey, 2010, p.9). New forms of protests and social movements had arisen, expressing counter-hegemonic aspirations (Ouviña, 2004). This involvement led to an increasing de-legitimisation of traditional parties as key political agents, and of the political representative system in line with neoliberal ideals, since these were seen as obstacles to social change. The left turn is then the result of such processes, including both a gradual development of (material) conditions and class consciousness (Thwaites Rey and Ouviña, 2014, p.296). A new mode of regulation became necessary, which is sometimes labelled post-neoliberalism (see 2.4.).

When giving equal weight to material capabilities, ideas and institutions, one can argue that the contradictions become blurred. This perspective accords with Gramsci's mission and is preoccupied with ideology, but might underestimated the importance of the capital relation (Burnham, 2006). With the focus on regulation, they miss seeing crisis as an expression of accumulation. In the case of the state, this leads to a 'slide towards an idealist account of the determination of economic policy' (Bieler and Morton, 2003). As I explain in more detail in 4.3.1., a key problem in this thinking is that state and market are ultimately treated as separate forms of social organisation, expressing political and

¹² This was dependent, among others, on the economic configuration, including the indebtedness, and on the perception of this situation held and articulated by national social forces (Thwaites Rey, 2010, p.6).

¹³ In this, state agencies closer to the global economy (offices of presidents and prime ministers, central banks, finance ministries) gained precedence over those closer to domestic public policy (ministries of industry; labour) (Cox, 1992, p.31).

economic power of capital. In this, they are externally related and the state is treated like a state in a capitalist society, not as a capitalist state (Bonefeld, 2006, pp.59-60).

Apart from these concerns that remain within the limits of existing Marxist state theorisation, this perspective on transforming Latin America does not address the specificity of pluri-national state idea and does not see how indigenous and non-indigenous struggles differ. Nevertheless, it helps shedding some light on why the left turn came about in the first place.

2.6.2. Ecuador and Bolivia through Gramscian lenses

Relational perspectives have also be used for explaining the transformations of and in Bolivia and Ecuador. In this, the current period is perceived as 'transitional' and while the neoliberal restructuring resembled a 'passive revolution' (Morton, 2006), this time, a hegemonic restructuring is anticipated (Thwaites Rey and Ouviaña, 2014). This hegemonic revolution is based on and pushed by domestic social forces, 'forming a majority alliance around a hegemonic project that is capable of bringing these groups together into a coherent programme' (Bieler and Morton, 2006, p.198).

Comparing the supposedly hegemonic transitions, Errejón and Guijarro find that while the 'MAS's hegemony seems more comprehensive, capable of dismantling opponents and mediated by organized social sectors', in the Ecuadorian alliance, the hegemonic capacity is 'weakly organized and centred around the charismatic leadership of an "outsider"' which makes it more dependent on its ability to dismantle potential opponents (Errejón and Guijarro, 2016, pp.50, 34). Hence, in Ecuador, the government is under more pressure to constantly reaffirm political boundaries. Yet, authors point out that also in Bolivia, transition is far from smooth. A counter-hegemonic project emerged in the Bolivian indigenous movements, for which the hegemonic project associated with the MAS-IPSP had created the space (Burman, 2014, p.247). For Webber (2016), Bolivia under Morales resembles more a 'passive revolution' as the post-2006 political economy has witnessed the continuous subjugation of indigenous workers and peasants to large capital.

In referring to the 'passive revolution', Webber also emphasises the need to go beyond the dominant perspective of the notion as these have 'treated the socio-political and the ideological as relatively autonomous from the process of capital accumulation' (ibid., p.1855). This criticism applies to Errejón and Guijarro and Burman, who largely remain at the social level. Webber suggests a perspective that better describes the contradictory capital accumulation, in which

[t]he actions of the state are not the mechanistic expression of an economic law of capital, but nor is the political under Morales properly understood except in relation to the disciplinary exigencies of capital accumulation (Webber, 2016, p.1862).

This is an important move towards identifying contradictions inherent in the state, which could be developed further and has the potential for explaining parts of the tensions present in the pluri-national experiments. However, despite pointing to the importance of the colonial aspect in struggles (Webber, 2017, pp.73-75), Webber fails to offer an approach to the state that makes its modern/colonial character explicit and addresses the specificity of the pluri-national idea.

Radhuber offers a different relational take on state transformation in Bolivia, focusing on power balances and the economic and political processes these produce (Radhuber, 2012, pp.182-183; Radhuber, 2013). In her analysis on pluri-national Bolivia, she borrows Jessop's notion of 'strategic selectivity' (Jessop, 1999) for understanding why the state terrain is 'more accessible for some individuals and social groups than for others, and limits the strategies that they can apply when addressing the state' (Radhuber, 2012, p.169). For her, this is crucial for understanding why the (extractivist) development goals are prioritised over indigenous rights and why in the pluri-national scenario, the centralisation of resources has increased (Radhuber, 2013).

While her analysis provides important insights into the Bolivian process and to the tensions present in the pluri-national scenario, she appears to treat state and market as ontologically different entities and remains largely at the social level (see 4.3.1.). It is also questionable if the colonial aspect and the specificity of the pluri-national idea are sufficiently integrated. Drawing on Jessop, her works seems to see the state 'merely an institutional ensemble' with state power being 'the forces acting within it' (Jessop, 1982, p.149). Is it just that the indigenous people are historically disadvantaged in influencing the state? Focusing on taxes and public finances in pluri-national Bolivia and not paying attention the autonomy, Radhuber (2013) is not open to seeing the pluri-national state as something potentially different from other states and hence, does not take the pluri-national idea seriously.

2.7. Summing-up

In this chapter, I reviewed how the state as a category is treated in key debates on recent Latin America. The regime-centred approaches hardly engage with state theorisation and the state is assumed to be an instrument of the government, a neutral actor in itself. This is also the case for some contributions on post-neoliberalism and neo-developmentalism, which often imagine that the state can be revived by government after being 'rolled back' in neoliberal times. Perceiving the state as an entity requiring no further analysis leads to a failure in acknowledging the heterogeneity of the state and an inability to understand the tensions found in the pluri-national state scenarios and to grasp the specificity of the pluri-national idea.

The more radical conceptualisations opposing neo-developmentalism, I summarised here under the banner of 'neo-extractivism', are more promising since they emphasise external constraints of state

transformation. Nevertheless, I pointed out that the notion of neo-extractivism fails to provide a conceptual tool for how this mediation between international and national takes place and it remains more than questionable if the pluri-national state idea can be properly understood from this perspective.

For Harnecker, revolutionary change occurs by taking state power and transforming its institutions, as it was attempted through '21st century socialism', a strategy used by progressive governments. For her, the state appears ultimately like an instrument, which leads to similar problems identified with neo-developmentalism or regime-centred approaches, since 'revolutions in the revolution' cannot be fully grasped. While tending to overemphasise the role of ideology, she treats political and economic sphere as externally related, which is, as argued in more detail in 4.3.1., problematic. In addition, she fails to offer a perspective on the idea of a *different* state and the rise of the pluri-national states.

Finally, I reviewed relational perspectives associated with the work of Gramsci and representing the most nuanced approach to the state. Yet, the Global Political Economy version falls short in perceiving the state as capitalist, and treating state and market as ontologically different entities (see 4.3.1.). The examples of relational approaches applied to the pluri-national scenario offer some insights into the process of state transformation that go beyond previously presented approaches. However, also here, the state is usually not framed as capitalist entity, but as an entity in a capitalist society. The presented authors also fail to explain the specificity of the pluri-national state idea. In the next chapter, I revise approaches to the state that pay more attention to the colonial aspect of it, which appear to have more potential incorporating the pluri-national idea into thinking of the state.

Chapter 3. Approaching the state's colonial colouring and state transformation in Bolivia

3.1. Introduction

In the past few decades, indigenous movements have shown their determination to resist 'surviving colonialism' (Mariátegui, 1971). They challenged '(post, neo) colonial power relations, institutional structures, modern nationhood and the monocultural state, the tare of colonialism' (Walsh, 2008, p.507). The literature reviewed in the previous chapter has not examine this aspect in the transformation. In this chapter, I engage with three sets of approaches that pay closer attention to how colonial history continues to shape Latin American society and state. I evaluate how far these accounts can shed light on the contradictory tendencies in the pluri-national experiments and are capable of making the specificity of the pluri-national state idea visible.

I first look at important Marxists, whose works offer perspectives on the colonial question. Then, I turn to the 'de-colonial option', which represents a Latin American variant of subaltern thought. The final part revolves around recent contributions of Bolivian academics associated with the *comuna*¹⁴, who closely observed and are involved in the transformation processes.

3.2. The colonial question in (Latin American) Marxism

Marx himself did not analyse the spread of capitalism in Latin America in depth (Aricó, 1982)¹⁵. However, several scholars employed his ideas to analyse the Latin American reality, yet most of them would agree that, 'we cannot mechanically apply what is outlined in Capital to the current reality of Latin America' (Harnecker, 2017). In what follows, I engage with Mariátegui and Guevara, Zavaleta, and the *dependistas*. These strands offer different takes on how the colonial experience has shaped and continues to shape Latin American state and society. I selected them as they tackle key questions related to the struggles of indigenous peoples, Latin American social formations, the spread of capitalism and global capital. All these question needs addressing to fully grasp the specificity of the pluri-national state idea and the tensions in the pluri-national experiments.

3.2.1. Mariátegui and Guevara: land reform and anti-imperial/colonial struggles

Mariátegui, whose works stem from the 1920s and early 1930s, emphasized that '[e]ducators can least afford to ignore economic and social reality' (Mariátegui, 1971, p.28). Analysing his home country, he found that '[t]he degree to which the history of Peru was severed by the conquest can be seen better on an economic than on any other level' (ibid., p.1). Independence was determined by developing

¹⁴ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to engage with accounts on the Ecuadorian state transformation. Lander (2012) is an important scholar, associated with *comuna* members, who analyses the Ecuadorian scenario.

¹⁵ This was due to Hegel's influence, who considered the Americas 'outside of history' (Aricó, 1982).

capitalist needs in the West and when, in Latin America, a 'bourgeois economy' gradually replaced feudalism, 'its colonial character within the world picture' remained intact (ibid., pp.6-7).

When considering the 'problem of the Indian', he rejects approaches that fail to see it as a socio-economic problem (ibid., p.22). Examining it in terms of ethnicity, administration, education and so on would just 'mask or distort the reality of the problem' (ibid., pp.22-24). The root of the 'problem of the Indian' lies in the land tenure system – hence, as long as landowners' feudalism exists, the problem remains (ibid.). By focusing on land ownership, he pays little attention to state theorisation, but largely envision it as a tool or an instrument used by those who control it. For him,

[a] new legal and economic order must, in any case, [be] the work of a class and not of a caudillo. When the class exists, the caudillo acts as its interpreter and trustee. His policy is no longer determined by his personal judgment but by a group of collective interests and requirements. Peru lacked a middle class capable of organising a strong and efficient state (ibid., p.50).

Under many 20th century progressive governments and revolutionaries on the continent, land reform was indeed a common promise, which also resonated with Mao Zedong's thought. Guevara, for example, noted that 'the Agrarian Reform is the basis upon which the new Cuba must build itself' (Guevara, 1961 [2002]).

Yet, Guevara was clear that a revolution involved more than struggles against feudalism and for agrarian reform. Confronting capitalism required tackling (US) imperialism and ending formal colonialism where present. Yet, to achieve these conditions, state power was needed, and for this, in largely rural Latin America, the peasantry as 'dormant force' was crucial 'for Latin America's liberation' (Guevara, 1963 [2005]). Being more heterogeneous and smaller in numbers, the peasants could not confront capitalism as the (urban) working class in the West could and so, Guevara and some others advocated guerrilla warfare as a method, which is 'the classical weapon of the peasantry, and not the working class' (Woods, 2007).

When the indigenous problem is tackled as a problem of land tenure, indigenous people are recognised as peasants. Guevara envisions anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles, but he does not acknowledge de-colonial struggles, though these are often seen as crucial in the emergence of the pluri-national idea and state (see 3.3.). Hence, these approaches are of limited use for understanding the specificity of indigenous people(s). For example, It becomes impossible to grasp, why indigenous movements in the Andes repudiated state power when struggling for a *different* state in the past few decades (Quijano, 2006, p.21). Additionally, with their restrictive perspectives on struggles and their limited analysis of the state as a category, Mariátegui, Guevara and several others following in their footsteps, fall short in elucidating the contradictory tendencies in the pluri-national experiments.

3.2.2. Gramsci in Latin America and Zavaleta on heterogeneous social formations

As already mentioned in 2.6., Gramsci's work is a crucial reference point for Marxists working on Latin America. Some of his concepts were strong in meeting empirical resonance in the region, also because they were relatively flexible (Aricó, 1988, p.126). Zavaleta's work is of great importance here, since he, drawing on Gramsci, sought to understand the specificity of the Bolivian society and state.

In his works that predate the 1952 Revolution, he still argues from a nationalist angle and follows a classic Marxist line of thought of a proletarian revolution aiming at bringing the bourgeois to its knees. In this, he overlaps with some other crucial socialist and communist revolutionaries of his days (see 3.2.1.). After the disappointing experience of the unfinished 1952 Revolution (see 5.7.), he sought to understand the unforeseen course of events, underpinned by the assumption that self-determination of the masses is the principle of world history (Zavaleta, 1983, p.114). This led him not to look for underlying laws or similar, but for the specificity of the Bolivian society. With this, he offers a critique of the recent development in Marxist state theorisation (see 4.3.1.), claiming that neither instrumentalist nor structuralist accounts addressed the questions of generalisability and applicability to all societies and times (Zavaleta, 1990, p.176).

He observed that sectors of the Bolivian society only partially relate to each other, with different forms of production and self-government co-existing (Tapia Mealla, 2015, p.14). In contrast to European experiences, in Bolivia, the amalgam of sectors of society into one unitary formation did not take place (Ortega, 2014, p.117). Instead, a 'motley society and formation' developed (Antezana, 2009, p.131). This lack of homogenisation is associated with the incomplete spread of the capitalist mode of production and fragmentation resulting from modern forms of political domination, mainly the state, that marginalises the majority of the population (Ortega, 2014).

In such 'motley society', the state has just seemingly sovereign domination over the different domains, making it an 'apparent' state (Tapia Mealla, 2014, p.163). For the state, which has to ideologically represent the interest of an abstract general public in a credible way and establish hegemony (see 2.5.), this becomes more difficult if social structures and interests are so distinct. The 'state/public optimum', meaning a situation with a positive co-relation of economic activity of a country, societal life and state, is prevented in Latin America due to dependency relations (Zavaleta, 1986, p.249).

Zavaleta's work is highly influential and his contribution to understanding the specificity of Bolivian social formation is enormous. Yet, as I argue in more detail in Chapter 4, it is problematic to assume an incomplete spread of the capitalism that leaves some social sectors outside the capital relation, as this involves a limited understanding of the universalising tendency of capital. In addition, such thinking can trigger the use of binary opposition, in which cultural and similar factors are overstated.

At the same time, when considering the state, Zavaleta appears to treat the state as an object of study that can be separated from society and the social relations of production. With the 'state/public optimum', for example, he delineates an abstract situation, and explains why this is unattainable in the Bolivian context. While his approach offers some insights into the emergence of the pluri-national idea and state and the conflicts present in it (see 3.4.), his work does not facilitate the development of a critique of the state.

3.2.3. Reformist and radical *dependistas*

While the previous perspectives largely focus on domestic scenarios, another major strand of Latin American Marxist thinking, dependency theory, is more concerned with perceiving colonial legacies for insertion in the world market. The *dependistas* emerged in the 1950 and 1960s as counter-current to the then mainstream a-historical development paradigm, in which development was imagined as a linear catching-up process. They instead emphasised the relational character of capital, making the insertion of the Latin American economies into the flow of capital to the industrialised world, dating back to colonial times, crucial for understanding the present scenario (Marini, 1973, p.15). In the periphery, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve an autonomous, dynamic process of technological innovation (Vernengo, 2006, p.552).

Reformist *dependistas*, among them Prebisch (1949), Sunkel (1969) and Furtado (1973, 1976), saw the possibility that with autonomous nationalist development, obstacles could be overcome, similar to Bresser-Pereira's more recent suggestion. In 2.3., I rejected the implied notion of the state that cannot grasp the specificity of the pluri-national idea as well as the flawed understanding of capitalism of the neo-developmental state and similar criticism applies to these forerunners.

Radical *dependistas*, building on Lenin and Luxemburg, among others, called the reformist strategy into question, often doubting the possibility of overcoming dependency altogether. For Dos Santos (1970), dependency is based upon the international division of labour that allows industrial development to happen only in some places and Frank (1969) found that the Latin American bourgeoisies have been structurally incapable of following a political line independent of imperialism. Cardoso and Faletto (1979) criticised the reformists for not looking at the social processes within the dependent world and treating the state like a black box, as in fact both external and internal factors shape dependency. Hence, not just some reformist policies, but profound change is needed for overcoming dependency. The experience from the Import Substitution Industrialisation experiments support this position over the reformist account, since the policies did not end dependency.

As indicated 2.3., radical *dependistas* sought to bring together internal and external dynamics to better capture the how the colonial experience continues to shape the Latin American states. While this goes

significantly deeper than just speaking about insertion into the world market, they still lack a concept for understanding the dynamic mediation of the international-national state-society relationship (Holloway, 1994, p.26). However, for understanding the state transformation and taking the plurinational idea seriously, such a concept is indispensable.

3.3. The state and (de)coloniality in a post-colonial world

For de-colonial thinkers, early 21st century Latin America did not solely experienced 'a turn to the left, but a decolonial turn' (Escobar, 2010). The 'de-colonial option' emerged parallel to rising indigenous struggles in the 1980s and 1990s and saw that the demand for self-determination sought the reordering of political, economic, administrative and judicial structures (Walsh, 2008, p.511). The key de-colonial thinkers are associated with the *Proyecto M/C (Proyecto Modernidad/ Colonialidad)*, a split from the Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, that emerged after the group Guha and Stoke had founded for studying Indian and South Asian history and present. The 'de-colonial option' formed as a critique to subaltern studies: Despite having contributed to the critique of Euro-centrism, the subalternists had favoured when heavily drawing on Gramsci and Foucault, a Western epistemology, which limits their ability to develop a critique to Euro-centrism (Grosfoguel, 2008). At the same time, de-colonial thinkers sought to offer a way of moving beyond post-colonial studies¹⁶ and World-system theory¹⁷ (Escobar, 2007, pp.179-180). It was also influenced by liberation theology, and earlier debates on modernity and post-modernity (ibid.). The 'de-colonial option' is crucial for this review, since it offers a distinct perspective on indigenous struggles and a more nuanced approach to the state compared to the previous sets of approaches found in this chapter.

As visible in the name of the group, modernity and coloniality lie at the heart of the 'de-colonial option'. Conquest is considered necessary for the rise of Western modernity, which is seen as a civilizational project that claims ego-less universality for itself. Modernity is not the result of 'internal superiority' of Europe, but of the 'discovery, conquest, colonisation and integration of other parts of the world', which allowed the imposition of an apparently *universal* paradigm (Dussel, cited by Castro-Gómez, 2008, p.271). In the modernisation processes in the periphery, transmitted values and forms have been mediated through the logic of colonial experiences. Hence, coloniality is modernity's 'other face' (Castro-Gómez, 2008, p.283) and its 'darker side' (Mignolo, 2011). 'Coloniality of power' (re)produces social discrimination, codified as ethnic, racial, anthropological or national, following specific historic, geographic and social contexts (Quijano, 2007, p.168). The nation-state can be seen

¹⁶ For de-colonial thinkers, the prefix indicating the 'end' of colonialism was misleading and they found that post-colonial scholars overemphasise cultural features, leading to a 'depoliticized evaluation of contemporary history' (Moraña *et al.*, 2008, p.11).

¹⁷ The main criticism is an overemphasis on structural features (Grosfoguel, 2009).

'as the political institutional form par excellence of the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system' (Grosfoguel, 2009). Over the past two centuries, the modern state has stood out in facilitating and reproducing modernity/coloniality of power, knowledge and being.

The nascent Latin America states formally resembled modern states like France and the United States (Mignolo, 2007, p.157) and embodied the three elements of Weber's *universal* definition¹⁸ (Weber, 2014 [1965]). While imposing these ideas largely from the outside, it implies the vision that 'society itself has to be resolved, modified, planned, controlled, ruled and disciplined' (Vega Camacho, 2012, p.105). The state appears as the subject appointed to work on society, by facilitating the flourishing and mushrooming of modern values and practices.

With the 'imagination of the figure of law' embodying seemingly universal, hence, ego-less moral and ethical standards, boundaries are also created between practices and spaces forming part of, and being 'accepted' by the state, and those excluded from it (Das and Poole, 2004, p.7). Such rules are enforced by the state through its administration, judiciary, police and military forces. In this, the rules, their enforcement and the state itself seem detached from the relations that have produced them. Yet, the setting and enforcing of 'objective rules' of 'universal appliance within the given territory', justifies and reproduces social order and hierarchies.

Alternatives to the modern universe, such as indigenous epistemologies, cosmologies and ways of life that do not correspond to modernity, are mediated through these apparently universal rules, principles and institutions, which conceal how the 'knowing subject maps the world and its problems, classifies people and projects into what is good for them' (Mignolo, 2009, p.159). Those who are not born into the universe, would either remain excluded, meaning their legal or physical elimination or become included at the cost of adaptation or assimilation as in the case of multiculturalism (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012, pp.98-100). In any case, they would be subjected to the 'national interest' defined by modern ideas of progress and development (Mignolo, 2007, p.157). This helps to explain why the indigenous movement in recent decades did not necessarily covet state power, but were struggling for a *different* state (Quijano, 2006, p.21). This might also help to explain, for example, the current experience with the translation of *Buen Vivir/Vivir Bien* into practice (see 1.1.).

Since for them, the modern state is deeply colonial, de-colonial thinkers are sceptical about a decolonisation of the state and the possibility of achieving profound changes with the state's help. For example, Grosfoguel (2011) admits that the nation-state is an important, yet limited space for radical transformation. Alternatives are sought elsewhere, since the solution to a 'global problem' cannot be

¹⁸ These are territory, population, monopoly of legitimate use of force. Today, in international (public) law, the recognition by others is added as a fourth element.

found at the national level, but would 'require global decolonial solutions' (ibid.) (for example, on 'socialisation of power', see Quijano, 2000b).

De-colonial thought offers a powerful tool for making sense of the rise of the pluri-national states, their normative specificity and why the practical experiments do not seem to meet expectations. In de-colonial thinking, the state is seen as inherently colonial and as key facilitator of the rule of capital. Nevertheless, the efforts in Bolivia and Ecuador to transform the state, that 'shed it of its colonial, neoliberal and imperial weight, and re-found it from below (...) are transcendental' (Walsh, 2009a, p.65). Mignolo finds the idea of the pluri-national state 'fascinating', since it makes the traditional, modern notions of democracy and socialism obsolete, that are based on their pretence of universality' (Mignolo, 2012).

De-colonial scholars increasingly move beyond offering a critique of coloniality/ modernity and their forms, which are constituted and reproduced through cognitive and discursive constructions, that appear (misleadingly) as universal and rational (Walsh, 2008, p.509). Going beyond this means working towards 'de-coloniality', that is 'de-colonial thinking and doing' (Mignolo, 2011: xxiv). As I explain in more detail in the next chapter, such epistemological projects should be treated with caution, since they risk triggering binary thinking.

3.4. The thinkers of the Bolivian *comuna*

In addition to Marxist thinkers and de-colonial thought, contributing to broader debates on Latin America, more specific contributions from Bolivia offer insights into the specificity of the pluri-national state idea. In what follows, I focus on the work of members of the *comuna* group, which was founded in 1998 by left-wing academics affiliated with the UMSA (*Universidad Mayor de San Andrés*). The *comuna* turned into a think tank of social movements and revolutionary uprisings and their contributions show 'the political nature of Bolivian social theory and highlight the social function that the intellectuals themselves perform' (McNelly, 2017, p.232).

3.4.1. The *comuna*

Seeking to understand popular uprisings in early 21st century, Tapia Mealla points to a double mismatch, firstly, between the cultural diversity of Bolivians and their rulers; secondly, between the diverse cultural matrix present and the state institutions (Tapia Mealla, 2008, p.49). With an arising new 'common sense'¹⁹, the floor was open for alternatives and diverse visions of life, new rights and productive capacities (Vega Camacho, 2012, p.105; García Linera, 2010). Partly overlapping with the previous subsection, Western epistemologies and the modern nation state were key points of attack.

¹⁹ This refers, drawing on Gramsci, to a set of beliefs that organises everyday actions and inter-subjective relations.

With varying emphases, all *comuna* members saw the need for establishing legal and political institutions in accordance with the pluri-cultural social reality (Vega Camacho, 2012). In this, Zavaleta's work and in particular his notion of 'motley society' were key points of reference (Tapia Mealla, 2014) (see 3.2.2.). The pluri-national concept increasingly prevailed, pointing to the agency of indigenous peoples in restructuring the state, aiming at undoing exclusion, marginalisation and subordination. In this, the state perceived a set of tools which intends

[t]o dismantle and take apart the structures of colonial power, in order to guide and develop new forms of legality, political institutions and authority, complying with the demands of a complex and plural society organised in social movements (Vega Camacho, 2012, p.98).

Prada Alcoreza links the pluri-national condition with institutional, administrative, normative and managerial pluralism needed for the aspired decolonisation (Prada Alcoreza, 2010, pp.89-90). Such thinking implicates a reversal of the prior dominant perspective, that sees the state as a subject and society as an object; the state becomes the object and society the subject (Vega Camacho, 2012, p.98).

The joint publication from 2005 shows for Baker (2015b) 'probably the most mature elaborations [...] on the historicity of the crisis of the Bolivian state' in the early 2000s. In this, their great strength in grasping this crisis lies in them working theoretically at two levels²⁰: For example, for García Linera, the uprisings expressed a crisis of the neoliberal model, including the social and ideological basis on which it was built (García Linera, 2006, p.73). Yet, it was also a crisis of a deeper kind, which is 'an institutional and ideological crisis of the republican state, premised since its foundation on a colonial relationship to the indigenous majority of the Bolivian people' (ibid., p.74).

Two more books with contributions from the four core *comuna* members were published (García Linera *et al.*, 2007; Sader, 2010). Despite the continuous acknowledgement of the centrality of the state, they do not work within or towards a common or consistent theorisation of the state, which could have integrated the two crises into thinking the state. Instead, they approach the state openly, visible in the prologue of their 2010 book, where the state is defined as 'a relation and ensemble of structures, which is the result of political struggles. The state is battle field and form of political struggle' (García Linera *et al.*, 2010, p.7, author's translation).

Hence, the *comuna* often broadly overlaps with the perspective on the 'state as a social relation' (see 2.6.). In this, the *comuna* scholars did not see the pluri-national as completed with the new constitution, but envisioned it as a long-term horizon. Prada Alcoreza (2010), for example, noted that the greatest challenge Bolivia faces when moving towards the pluri-national state are those old 'sticky'

²⁰ See also Tapia Mealla (2015, pp.29-33).

schemes. Vega Camacho, following Reinaga, sees state building as dependent 'on the amount of our work, on the ability and clumsiness of our hands and minds' (Vega Camacho, 2012, p.96).

Despite these challenges, there seems to be an underlying assumption that the functioning of the state can be changed altogether. The state appears to reside in a capitalist society, making it ultimately not an inherently 'capitalist state', which can lead to a problematic assessment of the current contradictory tendencies as no more than 'creative tensions' (see 3.4.2.). In addition, they might ultimately underestimate the colonial colouring of the state, emphasised by de-colonial scholars.

Against the background of recent 'revolutions in the revolutions' (Reyes, 2012), and the tensions identified by various scholars (see 1.1.), the *comuna* members found different ways of assessing the pluri-national scenario. In this, a severe divide between Vice-President García Linera and the others became apparent.

3.4.2. García Linera as a 'collective intellectual'

When the MAS-IPSP took state power, the vice-president turned into 'an intellectual of the State' interpreting Bolivian history and, based on this, develop political proposals (Baker, 2015a, p.283). While he is sometimes described as an 'organic intellectual' (Geddes, 2014, p.168), he sees himself as an 'collective intellectual', representing the subalterns from emergence to hegemony (Ovando, 2008, p.100).

As mentioned above, for him, the uprisings of the early 2000s expressed a crisis of the neoliberal and colonial state, in which the correspondence between society and state regime was distorted (García Linera, 2006, p.73). Each crisis happens in five steps (García Linera, 2010):

1. The revilement, that started in 2000 with the 'Water War';
2. Catastrophic stalemate with the presence of two antagonist positions (since 2003);
3. Substitution of government elites, taking place with Morales' inauguration in 2006;
4. The construction and consolidation of a new power block from the state; and
5. The 'bifurcation point'²¹, marking the end of crisis and new stable social order.

While the first ones are closely modelled on the Bolivian post-2000 scenario, the fourth and fifth give direction to the process. In 2010, he suggested that recent Bolivia has been a 'living laboratory of the rapid and antagonistic transformation from one state form to another' (García Linera, 2010, p.37). With the new Constitution, it is time to focus on stabilising control and power exercised by the new dominant coalition. In this, the most revolutionary task is the promotion of a new state bureaucracy (ibid., pp.38-39).

²¹ With this concept, he refers to the observation by the physicist Prigogine, who studied non-equilibrium systems that after some time, can result in a new order. The point at which the unstable system could move towards a new equilibrium is called bifurcation point (García Linera, 2006, p.46).

In this, he perceives the state as 'the most idealized totality of political action, since it is the only place in the political field where ideas materialize and have a general social effect' (ibid., p.35). It 'is the only [one] that can unite society it assumes the synthesis of the general will and the one which plans the strategic framework and the first waggon of the locomotive' (García Linera, cited by Solón, 2016, pp.56-57, author's translation).

This perspective of the state appears limited. For Lewis (2013), it shows 'a fine bureaucrat's mind at work', that departs from his earlier thinking. If this was Marxist, the self-emancipation of workers and peasants would be 'the idealized totality of political action', while constitutions, laws and so on would be rather the consequences of revolutionary activity, which 'may eventually pass through a state apparatus as part of becoming institutionalized' (ibid.). What he describes is not a transformation of the state, but substitution of new personnel for old, leading Hylton (2011) to write 'new wine, old bottles'. There is no scope for deeply and critical engaging with the state's colonial and capitalist colouring, which had triggered the earlier crisis.

More concerned with re-stabilising the state, he foresees 'a possible opening to alternative forms of governance that quite simply refused the State as a legitimate political body' (Baker, 2015a, p.293). Struggles, including those of indigenous peoples for a *different* state become invisible. When responding to criticisms from his former colleagues on the government's approach towards social movements, he argues

[a]nd if there is still much to do in order to construct a new and transparent judicial system that truly serves society, in this stage of transition it is the logic of the working people that prevails, the State, as the synthesis of the common interest, cannot, nor should it, lose to anyone, and the defence of the public patrimony stands above the defence of private or personal interest (García Linera, 2011b, p.117, author's translation).

In this, people appear not to have the right to speak up against this state, which is also unnecessary as the state comprehends the 'logic' of workers (Lewis, 2013), while indigenous peoples remain unmentioned. From a de-colonial point of view, such thinking reproduces coloniality and naturalises if not idealises the state, while the specificity of the pluri-national idea is not seen. As I show in Chapter 4, this hinders the development of a critique of the state form, which might not be surprising as this might go against his interest as intellectual of the state.

Next to the emphasis on a new state bureaucracy, García Linera's thinking also serves to legitimise 'Amazonian-Andean capitalism', the strategy promoted by the government to ultimately overcome capitalism. He advocates, mainly based on Lenin²², the introduction of greater state control over the

²² Lewis (2013) accuses him of misreading Lenin, as he fails 'to understand the specificity of Lenin's ideas on the nationalization of oil and what Lenin had in mind when urging the need to establish state capitalism in 1918', among others.

major industries, gas and oil in particular (García Linera, 2011b). His former *comuna* colleague finds that the hydrocarbon nationalisation enabled the state to seemingly modify its role in this sector; yet, dependency on revenues would lead to submission to larger forces and a weakening of the dignity of the intra-state 'nation' communities (Vega Camacho, 2012, p.106). Also, scholars speaking of neo-extractivism (see 1.1., 2.3.) and radical *dependistas* (see 3.2.3.) would reject the idea, that 'Amazonian-Andean capitalism' can ultimately end capitalism and dependency. This indicates that García Linera falls short in seeing how the Bolivian state transformation is embedded in the global sphere, focusing overly on domestic affairs and at most seeing external conditions affecting the scenario. In addition, this strategy clearly contradicts the demands of some peoples for a *different* pluri-national state and so, García Linera's recent thinking does not offer a convincing perspective on the existing deep tensions in pluri-national Bolivia.

While the bifurcation point means not an end of conflict, it would then no longer be 'structural' conflict (García Linera, 2010, p.36). Accordingly, the contradictory tendencies present in the pluri-national scenario appear as 'creative tensions' in the consolidation of the pluri-national state (García Linera, 2011a). While this appears to severely underestimate the nature of tensions, more fundamentally, the specificity of the pluri-national state idea, which appears vital for fully grasping the contradictions in the pluri-national state experiments, remains largely unaddressed.

3.4.3. Tapia Mealla, the impossibility of hegemony and moving the state out of the centre

Other former *comuna* members turned into 'fierce critics of the Morales administration and of García Linera in particular as an esteemed intellectual figure within it' (Baker, 2015a, p.295). For Tapia Mealla, mainly drawing on Gramsci and Zavaleta, the divided state of the first years of the 21st century has given way to what he calls 'constitutional state as tyranny' (Tapia Mealla, 2011). This process was facilitated by the conjunctural relative autonomy of the state, which started when the MAS-IPSP took state power (Tapia Mealla, 2014, p.163). The government party's strategy was to expand the political monopoly, meaning to reconstitute the state in the sense of unifying political power through formal, repressive or institutional measures (ibid., p.164). Thus, the pluri-national idea was not translated into practice and the pluri-national state continues to be organised in the format of a liberal state (Tapia Mealla, 2015, p.133). Measures, which ended the historically already relatively low autonomy of the different state organs, were initiated by the government and enacted with the help of the large majority in parliament (Tapia Mealla, 2014, p.165). Hence, the government does not allow political pluralism.

In line with earlier thinkers (see 3.2.2.), Tapia argues that reaching hegemony is impossible in Bolivia. The MAS-IPSP was part of the historic block that emerged against neoliberalism, but once in power, it

worked towards disarticulating this block (Tapia Mealla, 2015, p.136). As in 1952, the process of inclusion meant subordination of the organic representatives of the indigenous-peasant block (ibid., p.130). In 2010/11, the contradiction between the economic project of the governing party and the horizon and political project of the lowland peoples triggered the rupture of the historic block (ibid., p.131). As long as there is contradiction in the historic block between two hegemonic projects, it is impossible to build hegemony, which makes it, what Gramsci calls a negative constitution of hegemony (ibid., p.138).

With regards to approaching the state, Tapia Mealla more recently suggests moving it out of the spotlight. By this, he means to see it as a social relation that is part of a more extensive whole of political forms and relations (Tapia Mealla, 2014, p.170; 2015). With an overly state-centred perspective, it would be impossible to grasp what he calls 'wild politics' (*políticas salvajes*) (Tapia Mealla, 2008), that question hierarchical forms and relations of domination, including the state (Tapia Mealla, 2014, p.169). Since '*políticas salvajes*' are exceeded constituent politics, the state apparatus of capture, normalisation and monopoly can never control it (Tapia Mealla, 2008, p.116). When seeking to comprehend the contradictory pluri-national scenario, it appears promising to see the state as part of an extensive whole. Yet, to move it out of the centre, it must first be theorised and conceptualised in a way that allows precisely this.

3.5. Summing-up

In this chapter, I engaged with the body of literature that sheds light on questions on how the colonial experience continues to shape Latin American states and societies, which scholars reviewed in Chapter 2 have either omitted or briefly addressed.

The Marxist perspectives addressing the colonial question offer very distinct perspectives on the state and the colonial aspect. Mariátegui and Guevara are of little help when seeking to comprehend of the tensions in the pluri-national scenario, since they do not critically approach the state and its colonial colouring. This becomes also visible when they treat indigenous people as peasants and their struggles as anti- but not de-colonial ones. The Gramscian relational perspective, already discussed in the previous chapter (see 2.5.), and Zavaleta's work appear more helpful yet fall short in offering a profound critique of the state, which is important when attempting to fully understand the pluri-national idea and the tensions found in the pluri-national experiments. In addition, as I show in the following chapter, it is problematic to assume that indigenous peoples are outside the social relations of capital. The radical *dependistas* (see also 2.3.), offer perspectives that reflect on the insertion into the world market, dating back to colonial times, and on how this has shaped and continues to shape Latin American economies and societies. Yet, they lack a concept of how this mediation takes place.

Secondly, I looked at the 'de-colonial option', which offers promising insights into the state and the specificity of the pluri-national state idea. It suggests that the state is a modern notion and institution, with characteristics partly hidden and deeply embedded in modern thought. The state subtly reproduces coloniality through universal laws and rules. This might serve as a starting point for making sense of the disappointment of peoples in Bolivia that, having demanded *another* state, and nominally won their demands, are now feeling disappointed or betrayed. Yet, with a more nuanced perspective on the state, capitalism and modernity/coloniality could be linked and integrated more clearly.

Finally, I reviewed approaches, associated with scholars from the *comuna*. In general terms, they reproduce a relational understanding of the state; hence some points of critique raised in the previous chapter apply. Since they played a key role in promoting the process, their early rather optimistic views are not surprising. More recently, the group split. On one hand, García Linera's recent work backs up the governmental strategy. In his bifurcation thesis, the recent rebellions in the pluri-national state are creative tensions and unrelated to structural questions. In his agenda of stabilising the state, he fails to account properly for the experiences of those who demanded a *different* state. At the same time, by focusing overly on national processes, seemingly solely affected by some external conditions, he appears not to offer a relational perspective on how the Bolivian state is embedded in the international system and global economy. On the other hand, Tapia, drawing mostly on Gramsci and Zavaleta, charges the government with disarticulating the historic block. With regards to the state, he suggests moving it out of the centre of attention, since this would obscure key aspects of struggles. While this is an important point, it should not lead to ignoring the state.

Chapter 4. Epistemological-theoretical framework, methodological approach and research design

4.1. Introduction

As shown in the literature review, relational approaches to the state seem promising for understanding the contradictory tensions in the pluri-national experiments. Yet, when wanting to make sense of the pluri-national idea and experiment, scholars mentioned in Chapter 3 point to the necessity of taking the colonial experience seriously as it continues to profoundly shape Latin American states and societies. Some post-colonial and subaltern thinkers suggest colonial history renders Western or Eurocentric approaches misleading.

Starting from this criticism I develop in this chapter the epistemological-theoretical framework, methodological approach and research design that will guide my analysis of the recent state transformation in Bolivia. Having dealt with the post-colonial and subaltern critique, I propose that the recuperation of the notion of 'form' as used in the CSE (Conference of Socialist Economists) and Open Marxism seems capable of addressing the concerns of post-colonial and subaltern thinkers. I review the development of the idea of political form and pay closer attention to the CSE/Open Marxist approach, which sees the state as the political form of the social relation of capital. This leads to the reconsideration of (de)colonising CSE/Open Marxism as a Western approach. Finally, I turn to the methodological approach and study design. In this, I set forth the fundamentals and scope of the form-analysis. Based on this, I elaborate on suitable research methods as well as ethical considerations and challenges, paying particular attention to the possibilities for decolonising the research process.

4.2. Addressing post-colonial and subaltern/ de-colonial critiques

4.2.1. Misleading Euro-centric approaches?

Post-colonial studies and recent variants, subaltern studies and de-colonial thought, have challenged Western world views in several ways. Western theories are especially under attack since these steer thinking and evaluating the non-Western world erroneously (Young, 2003, p.2). Particularly indigenous peoples, usually 'associated with a non-industrial mode of production' (Eriksen, 1997), pose a challenge to the classic Marxist notion of 'class struggle'. Western categorisations such as class are 'unable to take into account (...) "lived experience" of religion and social customs' outside the West (Prakash, 1994, p.1477). The theories behind such categories would serve to legitimate their existence (ibid., p.1490).

Mignolo (2000) associated with the Latin American variant of subaltern studies, de-colonial thought, speaks of a 'colonial difference', that is a difference appearing hierarchically. Finding its origin in racial differentiation in colonial times, it has persisted after independence and finds expression in political,

social, economic and historical differences (Moraña *et al.*, 2008, p.6). Western thinking would not just fail to acknowledge this, but even makes other ways of thinking invisible. Santos calls Western thinking 'abyssal thinking'. It

consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of 'this side of the line' and the realm of 'the other side of the line' (Santos, 2007, pp.45-46).

Alternative epistemologies become invisible in such Western thinking, since presuppositions 'elevate Western knowledge as real knowledge while ignoring other knowledge' (Doxtater, 2004, p.618).

For de-colonial scholars, modern/colonial Western thinking is incapable of grasping 'internal colonialism'²³ (González Casanova, 1965) and 'coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2000a), that is a global hegemonic model of power which has been 'in place since the Conquest, and articulates race and labor, space and peoples' (Escobar, 2007, p.185). With formal decolonisation, coloniality 'transformed its outer form' (Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992, p.550) but continues as an 'organizing principle' (Grosfoguel, 2009, p.20).

Even though recent developments of Marxist state theorisation increasingly promote a relational approach to the state (for example, Jessop, 2008b), the colonial question has not been properly addressed. For post-colonial thinkers and similar, it is impossible to grasp 'coloniality' in terms of class struggle, seen as struggles between capitalists and workers or capital and labour. A key concern in this is the incomplete spread of the capitalist mode of production, described, for example, by Zavaleta (see 3.2.2.,3.4). In Marxist relational approaches, a unified social formation is assumed. Therefore, Marxist relational approaches only offer a misleading reading of the (pluri-national) state. Is it then necessary to develop a new radically different approach towards the state in countries like Bolivia?

4.2.2. The need to go beyond binary thinking

To begin with, the agenda of decolonising knowledge by establishing something radically different can be challenged by their own practice. Rivera Cusicanqui (2012) finds that the small focal group of de-colonial scholars privilege some knowledge and colleagues over others. By this, those located in the North would - 'through the game of who cites whom' and their links with universities and intellectuals in the South - reproduce a hierarchical structure (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012, p.103). The point is not to blame these individuals, but demonstrate that they are not 'outside' but instead reproduce rules dominating (Western) academia. How could they then produce radically different knowledge(s)?

²³ With this concept, he refers 'to a structure of social relation based on domination and exploitation, among culturally heterogeneous distinct groups' (González Casanova, 1965, p.33).

At the theoretical level, caution is required with approaches triggering binary oppositions like *their* knowledge against *our* knowledge. Apparently opposed categories like tradition and modernity, (frequently used in literature on indigenous peoples), are not only underpinned by certain value judgements implying hierarchising, but are also irrelevant in reality as they are not mutually exclusive (Germond-Duret, 2016, p.1544-1549). Binary thinking runs the risk of over-emphasising cultural factors and hence only offers a fragmented view on struggles (Dinerstein, 2015, p.212).

Chibber offers a powerful response to contemporary post-colonial thought and particularly the Indian subalternists²⁴ as 'representative stream' (Chibber, 2013, p.9), showing that the idea that Western thinking per se 'ignores the nonwest or that it imposes western categories artificially, or that it is blind to the realities of the nonwestern world, is pretty far-fetched' (Farbman and Chibber, 2016). Subalternists have a misleading view on the colonial experience and misrepresent the relationship between modernity and capitalism (ibid., p.24). Instead,

[c]olonial modernity produces a capitalism that accommodates to the hierarchies and the culture of the ancient regime. This is capitalism, yes, but without capitalist power relations and without a recognizably capitalist culture (Chibber, 2013, p.16).

The subalternists would hence misunderstand the 'universalising tendency of capital' as leading to a homogenisation of power relations and institutions (ibid., pp.286-287). '[W]hat is universalised under the rule of capital is not the drive for a consensual and encompassing political order, but rather the compulsions of market dependence', meaning a drive 'to produce in order to sell – production for exchange value, not for use' (ibid., p.16). Therefore, differences are even actively promoted when beneficial for capital (ibid., p.287). Hence, specific and varying relations of power, including those usually associated with pre-capitalist societies, can co-exist as they do in Zavaleta's 'motely societies', while facilitating capital's globalising mission.

In addition, the claim that the notion of class (struggle) does not reflect the experiences of indigenous peoples, reveals a flawed reading of Marxist theorising. Marx indeed focuses on the exploitation of workers, who he saw 'at the heart of the capitalist system', and who due to their large numbers and strategic position as systematically exploited collective appeared as a crucial potential source of resistance (Chibber, 2016, pp.126-127). However, this does not mean that capitalist exploitation is limited to the factory floor: Capitalism 'creates an entire culture in which the logics of oppression and competition become common sense' that would turn 'people against each other and their own humanity' (Majumdar, 2016, p.68).

²⁴ Even though he does not directly address Latin American scholars, his arguments are relevant for the points raised above.

Subalternists and de-colonial scholars rightly highlight that the processes in, and through which, the Latin American states emerged and developed are different to those in the West. Yet, Chibber (2013) shows that the universalising tendency of capital goes hand in hand with varying power relations in the world. Additionally, the notion of class struggle should not be read too narrowly (Holloway, 1993). Hence, a Marxist relational approach to the state is not doomed to fail on the basis of the distinctiveness of non-West relations requiring other non-Western approaches to non-Western states.

4.3. Towards an alternative approach: The notion of *form*

Having argued that Western approaches to the state should not per se be rejected, it is now necessary to identify the most appropriate approach for understanding the contradictory pluri-national experience in a way that is capable of taking the pluri-national state idea of a *different* state seriously. I propose that the notion of 'form' as employed in the CSE and Open Marxists, offers a powerful conceptual device for thinking state transformation in Bolivia, which recognises 'the elastic, adaptable, and integrative power of capitalism' (Susen, 2012, p.281). It also appears more promising for comprehending the pluri-national state than previously employed relational approaches, since the notion of form moves from a photograph of society to its negative (Holloway, 1995, p.165). Incorporating 'what is not' is crucial for comprehending the emergence and development of the pluri-national state, that was underpinned by the idea of a *different* state, which would not render alternative epistemologies and cosmologies invisible or assimilate and subordinate them to the dominant ones. Yet, before introducing the CSE/Open Marxist perspective on the state in some detail, I contextualise it in relevant Marxist debates in the second half of the 20th century.

4.3.1. Development of the notion of the state as a *form*

The notion of 'form' gained prominence in contributions to the State Derivation Debate, the CSE and Open Marxism. Yet, in the following, the Miliband-Poulantzas debate is the starting point, as this controversy 'provided a point of departure for many recent developments in state theory' (Hay, 1999, p.167) and 'form' was introduced in response to it.

Miliband-Poulantzas Debate

With increasing scepticism towards the Post-War compromise in the late 1960s, Marxist academics revived debates on the state, seeking to challenge dominant pluralist approaches to the state²⁵, in which it appeared as 'neutral umpire to the freely articulated demands of a pluralist society' (Martin, 2008, p.12). When reconsidering the relationships between state, economy and class in capitalist societies, two positions crystallised, with Miliband and Poulantzas engaging in the flagship debate.

²⁵ Pluralist thinking, most prominently associated with Dahl (2005), also underpins the perspectives of the state as a 'thing' (see Chapter 2).

Miliband's 1969 book sought to demonstrate with a variety of pieces of empirical evidence²⁶ that the governing class was the capitalist class. In this, Miliband defines the capitalist class in classic Marxist terms as 'that class that owns and controls the means of production and which is able by virtue of economic power (...) to use the state as its instrument for the domination of society' (Miliband, 1969, p.23). He nevertheless found that the state has some autonomy from the capitalist class, which allowed reforms beneficial for the working class.

Poulantzas' professor, Althusser, distinguishes three different but connected levels in capitalist society, with politics and ideology being relatively autonomous from the economic base, that nevertheless ultimately determines the other two (Carnoy, 1984, p.90). Poulantzas sought to advance the theory of the political level, being not less ambitious than seeking 'to complement Marx's Capital, which Poulantzas regarded as providing only a theory of the economic level' (Clarke, 1991c, p.34). In his 1968 book, he argues for a *relative autonomy* of the state from class struggles (Poulantzas, 1968).

The Miliband-Poulantzas debate is usually seen as confronting instrumentalist with structuralist perspectives on the capitalist state²⁷. Poulantzas attacked Miliband for criticising conventional theories by 'placing himself on their own terrains' (Poulantzas, 1969, p.69) and bluntly employing class reductionism in 'which the dominant class stamped its character on the state' (Clarke, 1991c, p.20). Miliband's emphasis on relations between people with political power as a matter of such ties, would be misleading, since he assumes a subjective set of relations (Martin, 2008). For Poulantzas,

the relation between the bourgeois class and the State is an objective relation. This means that if the function of the state is a determined social formation and the interests of the dominant class in this formation coincide, it is by reason of the system itself (Poulantzas, 1969, p.73).

Therefore, when the ruling class participates in the state, it is an effect, but not a cause. Poulantzas argued that 'the state can only truly serve the ruling class in so far as it is relatively autonomous from the diverse fraction of this class, precisely in order to be able to organise the hegemony of the whole of this class' (ibid., p.74). The lacking theoretical account of the structural relation between class and society and his instrumentalist methodology led Miliband to see the state as a state in capitalist society (Clarke, 1991c, p.19).

In response, Miliband criticised Poulantzas' emphasis on objective structures and relations, claiming that these were merely substitutes for the 'ruling class' (Miliband, 1970). Poulantzas' position would not lead him to abandon instrumentalism, since he saw the ruling class as dominant within the system.

²⁶ Among others, on social background, networks and values.

²⁷ Still, among others, Carnoy (1984) points out that viewing Miliband as instrumentalist is mistaken, since the differences are more related to methods and diverging views on the structure-agency relation.

In his structural deterministic approach, Poulantzas would see the 'state elite [...] totally imprisoned in objective structures' (ibid., p.58). It then would not matter if conservatives, social democrats or fascists ruled.

Reflecting upon this debate²⁸, Jessop finds that both positions were so distinct that 'they were actually discussing two different types of theoretical objects' (Jessop, 2008b, p.153). Yet, both appear to work 'within traditional confines of bourgeois social theory, according to which social theory is either a theory of structures or of social action' (Bonefeld, 2008, p.65). They tried to complement Marx' analysis of the supposedly economic level with one of the political level. By this, they atomise the state theoretically and detach it methodologically from the social relations of capital (Dinerstein, 2017). This means

a misunderstanding of Marx's great work, which is not an analysis of the 'economic level' but a materialist critique of political economy, i.e. precisely a materialist critique of bourgeois attempts to analyse the economy in isolation from the class relations of exploitation on which it is based (Holloway and Picciotto, 1977, p.82).

The State Derivation Debate

In West-Germany of the late 1960s, the 'economic miracle' appeared to come to an end, 'new social movements' emerged and the first post-war social-liberal coalition assumed power. This context triggered debates about state power, in which the derivationists played a crucial role, who saw the need to deepen the understanding of the state-economy relation. For this, they found it crucial to move beyond the Miliband-Poulantzas debate, further functionalist approaches of 'state monopoly capitalism'²⁹ (Stützle, 2009, p.14) and the works of Habermas (1973) and Offe (1984)³⁰. The 'error' of bourgeois theorisation and the aforementioned critical responses is that they 'fetishise the differentiated forms of capitalist social relations by detaching them from one another and treating them as (...) independent social relations' (Clarke, 1991c, p.10). The 'functionalist' approaches furthermore ignored the question of how the state 'comes into being in the first place' (ibid., p.9). Seeking to move beyond these shortcomings, the derivationists posed the following question:

What is it, then, about class domination in capitalist society (...) that generates the 'fantastic form' of the state, that makes the state assume a form apparently separated from the immediate process of production? (Holloway and Picciotto, 1977, p.78).

²⁸ It is beyond the scope of this chapter to recall the whole debate – see, for example, Nash and Rich (1975) and Jessop (2008a).

²⁹ The Monopoly Capitalism School argues that once a large-scale enterprise has obtained a monopoly or the form of a cartel in most relevant markets, it melts together with the government. This approach fails to see the state's class character.

³⁰ Criticising the Monopoly Capitalism School and drawing on the Frankfurt School, they pointed to the 'integrative function of the state, as means of channelling, filtering and reformulating economic, social and political demands in an attempt to reconcile the range of conflicting pressures to which the state was subject' (Clarke, 1991c, p.6). The CSE saw in this an overly sociological view on the state, in which the capital-state relation is treated as an external one (ibid., p.8).

This question indicates that they read Marx' critique of the political economy and his theory of value not 'as a theory of the "economic" but as a theory of the social relations of capitalist society as a whole' (Clarke, 1991c, p.9). By this, they could develop a historical-materialist critique of the state, in which the state is derived from the categories developed in *Kapital*. Such derivation needed to be logical, meaning that separate spheres are a necessary result of the social form of capitalist relations of production, and historical, involving tracing back how the separation emerged historically (ibid.). In what follows, I focus on two threads in the debate³¹: firstly, the most popular and secondly, the thread I consider to have dramatically influenced later state theorisation.

The first perspective is associated with the works of Müller and Neusüß (1971), Altvater (1972), and Blanke *et al.* (1975), which drew on Engels' *Anti-Dühring*. In this, Engels argued that the 'modern state, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine; it is the state of the capitalists, the ideal collective body of all capitalists' (Engels, 1878 [1947]). For the derivationists, it was the generalisation of commodity production that led to the separation of state from civil society, which was necessary for ensuring capital accumulation, since capital required a political entity not subjected to or bounded by the limits of capital. Only by this, it could be capable of maintaining the 'general interest of total social capital'³² (Müller and Neusüß, 1971). Hence, they derived the separation from the

dual character of commodities as involving, on the one hand, an exchange of commodities as subject to law of value and, on the other hand, a relationship of ownership between the subjects of exchange and their commodities (Clarke, 1991c, p.11).

Moving beyond hitherto existing theoretical approaches, this approach demonstrates the separation of economic and social spheres (Holloway and Picciotto, 1978). Nevertheless, critics point out that it was problematic to see the state as formulating and implementing 'the general interest of capital' given its assumed but de facto lacking omnipotence and independence (Clarke, 1991c, p.11). This becomes particularly apparent when looking at states outside Western Europe. Mainly concerned with the contradictory relations of individual capitals, this approach also lacks an understanding of the state's evolution, making it a-historical.

The second position is mainly associated with Hirsch (1974), who sought to overcome shortcomings in the first approach. For him, the state cannot be derived on the basis that it is necessary to establish capital's general interest and results from competition between groups of, or individual, capitals

³¹ A third position is represented by von Flatow and Huisken (1973). For a summary, see Holloway and Picciotto (1978, p.23).

³² Altvater defines total social capital as 'the unified organization in the sense of being the real and general existence of the various capital units, whose subjective actions, determined by the given conditions, cause, thus, "behind their backs", these general conditions to be the conditions of total capital' (Altvater, 1972, p.77). The capitalist 'laws of motion' is, hence, always linked with the total social capital and with the single capital units. Still, these units are 'through their actions [...] the unconscious means by which capitalist regularity is achieved'; in other words, the capital units' act and not the total social capital (ibid.).

(Holloway and Picciotto, 1978, p.24). Instead, it should be derived from the social relations in capitalist society and its proper nature of domination. The creation of 'formal' freedom and equality occurs parallel to the establishment of the state as monopoly of force (Hirsch, 1974). While the form cannot know what the general interest of capital is, it can only take on functions within the limits posed by its own form (Carnoy, 1984, p.141). With Hirsch's own words, '[t]he bourgeois state as an instance raised above the direction production process can only maintain its form if the capital reproduction process is guaranteed and its own material basis thus secured' (Hirsch, 1978). This means the functions of the state can never be more than creating external conditions for the process of social reproduction that regulates itself based on the law of value (ibid.). Hence, as the capitalist state has to rely on expanded capital accumulation, conditioning its reproduction, its autonomy is limited (Clarke, 1991c, p.14).

To grasp the conflict-ridden process of capital accumulation, Hirsch draws on Marx' tendency of the rate of profit to fall³³, seeing it as the 'dynamic force behind the development of the process of accumulation and hence the development of the state itself' (Holloway and Picciotto, 1978, p.25). In this, the tendency of profit to fall is not understood as a law or a logic of capital accumulation, but as an effect of capital's failure to perpetuate domination over labour (ibid., p.26). Since the state's own reproduction is directly affected by the crisis-tendencies of accumulation, it reacts to crises and is key in counter-balancing the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (Carnoy, 1984). For this purpose, the state employs measures such as the reorganisation of relations of surplus extraction and production.

Yet, state reorganisation and policies are hardly reducible to counter-balancing the tendency of rates of profit to fall. Class struggle also matters, visible in state's response to working class struggle that incorporated welfare state measures (Clarke, 1991c, p.14). State interventions are a necessary containment to assure the domination of capital while keeping struggles and capital in motion. In this sense, he agrees with Miliband that there is scope for reform, meaning that the state is relatively autonomous. Yet, concessions ultimately depend on the growth of production and on more state intervention for sustaining capital accumulation.

This whole process is inherently contradictory and the state neither follows a pre-determined logic nor is it rational. It rather reproduces the conflicts we find in society in a political form. As the state is

³³ Marx was also not the first to see this 'as the result of the inner laws of capitalism' (Heinrich, 2013), but he claimed to be the first to have detected 'a coherent explanation for this law' (ibid.). In *Kapital*, Marx explains that in capitalism it is the competition in commodity and labour markets which tend to aggrandise capital, triggering a decline in the rate of profit. If the amount of capital grows, there are two antagonistic forces impacting on the rate of profit. On the one side, the principle of diminishing returns – the capital added is less productive. On the other side, the added capital often incorporates new technology reducing cost, which increases the rate of profit. In a nutshell, whether or not the rate of profit falls is dependent on the rate of change in capital accumulation in comparison to the rate of change in technological innovation and improvement. As the rate of profit not always decreases, but is prone to fall in the long run, Marx speaks of a 'tendency'.

open to competing capitalists' demands and interests, the state's counter-balancing strategy depends on political conflict resolutions between fractions of capital and particular capitals (ibid., p.15).

For Bonefeld, Hirsch enables looking at 'the historical existence of the state as a process, the historical form of which is a concrete reality of class antagonism' (Bonefeld, 1992, p.94). By this, he indicates 'a way of reconciling the institutional autonomy of the state with its necessary subordination to capital' (Clarke, 1991c, p.15). Despite these appraisals, especially with regards to his earlier theoretical promises, shortcomings were identified: He failed to demonstrate *the historical necessity* of the differentiation between economic and political spheres and did not provide historical evidence showing how this occurred (ibid.). For Holloway, 'the relation between logic and history is never satisfactorily resolved in Hirsch's work': logic appears as a 'general framework of development', a posteriori embellished with class struggle's history and ultimately subordinated to the logic (Holloway, cited by Dinerstein, 2017). In Hirsch, struggles seem to mainly take place between fractions of capital and particular capitals, which it would resolve in the way necessary for its own reproduction (Clarke, 1991c, p.16). Hence, Hirsch's work seems similar to Offe's 'structural-functionalism' (ibid.). His later work shows overlap with a strand of functionalist thought, regulation theory (Hirsch, 1991).

In the derivation debate, the relation between political and economic spheres was – unlike previous attempts – understood as an internal relation, which meant a tremendous advancement in thinking about the state. The notion of form was brought into the debate, opening space for seeing the state as the political form of the capital relation. Yet, the importance of struggles in the historical development of the state 'remained underdeveloped' (Bonefeld, 1992, p.94).

4.3.2. The CSE debate and Open Marxism

In the late 1960s, the CSE was founded as a 'non-sectarian and internationalist forum for theoretical Marxist political debate in the UK' (Dinerstein, 2017). The emerging debate on the capitalist system as a whole, was triggered by growing political conflict and intensifying economic crisis in Britain as well as controversies in the British left on the internationalisation of the state and globalisation (ibid.). In the 1990s, the debate continued under the banner of 'Open Marxism'. With regards to the state, the key contributors followed the derivationists in seeking to transcend instrumentalist and structural-functionalist approaches³⁴. Simultaneously, they sought to criticise the emerging Neo-Gramscian perspectives on globalisation and the 'internationalisation of the state'³⁵.

³⁴Their interest in the debate is also reflected in the volume of Holloway and Picciotto (1978), in which key pieces of the debate were published in English.

³⁵ The volume of Bonefeld *et al.* (2006) offers a summary of the debate. For a critical account towards Open Marxism, also see Drainville (1994).

Like the derivationists, these scholars perceived capital as a social relation and the state as the political form of it. Forms like the state were recognised as 'determinate negation' (Bonefeld, 1992, p.100), meaning that despite being internally linked, they coexist in a seemingly independent manner, being no more than externally related. Hence, this notion of form does not refer to a sub-category of a more general species, but to a 'mode of existence', living only in and through the form it takes (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1992a, p.xv).

In the CSE debate and Open Marxism, the world is understood in terms of struggle and so state, money and market are forms that struggle takes. Since the outcome of struggle is necessarily open, 'determinism of all kinds must vanish' (Burnham, 1994, p.225). Speaking of a logic or pre-determined function becomes mistaken and so is referring to the state 'as an apparatus or broken down into a conglomeration of apparatuses, ideological, mass-integrative, repressive, or whatever' (Holloway, 1991, p.235). Class struggle does not relate to structures of the state externally, as 'it is not only within but also against the existing state form', making the capitalist state form the *object* and *result* of struggle (Clarke, 1991c, p.41).

The capitalist state as a political form

For contributors to the CSE and Open Marxism, the state is a real or determinate abstraction, as it 'correspond[s] not to essential qualities embodied in things, but to determinate social processes' of global capital (Clarke, 1991a, p.144). The apparent separation between economic and political sphere alongside with the national state seemingly distinct from global processes, is no more than 'an institutionalised illusion' (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.26). Hence, it is wrong to conceptualise the state as a structure separated from society, which is as a formal abstraction. When abstracting the state *in* and not *from* society (Gunn, 1994, p.57), the starting point is social relations in the capitalist mode of production. 'A materialist theory of the state begins (...) by asking what it is about the social relations of production under capitalism that lead to the creation of apparently separate economic and political forms' (Holloway and Picciotto, 1977, p.78).

Since 'the abstraction of the state as such belongs only to modern times' (Marx, cited by Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.23), it is 'a historically specific form of political domination' (Holloway and Picciotto, 1977, p.77). In feudal societies, 'personal dependence characterises the social relations of production just as much as it characterises the other spheres of life that are based on that production' (Marx, 1872 [2011], p.89, author's translation). In capitalism, however, we find 'independent man', independent from a specific capitalist, who in turn is more flexible than the feudal lords (*ibid.*). It was hence the context of the changing relations of production, in which economic and political rule become separated, that gave rise to the political state (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.24).

Yet, the state did not automatically appear, but was driven by struggle (Gerstenberger, 1992, p.154). In a gradual change with political revolutions, sovereign power was brought to its knees and constituted the modern state as a 'matter of general concern' (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.24). Accordingly, the class character of the state is not based on the dominance of the capitalist class or the supremacy of production. It instead rests on 'the separation of the state from civil society and thus the political regulation of class antagonism upon which the class character of the state rests' (ibid.). With this separation, society and production are no longer 'political' – the political form becomes sourced out, which allows the emergence of the double freedom of the labourer³⁶. For Bonefeld,

[t]he political state is the premise of the non-coerced, depoliticised exchange relations between the buyers of labour power and the producers of surplus value who in spite of their manifest inequality pursue their interests in liberty as equal legal subjects, based on the rule of law (Bonefeld, 2014, p.166).

In capitalism, labour and capital enter a legal contract. Through law, property rights are codified and become enforceable, in other words, they become legally guaranteed (Clarke, 1991c, p.11). The state acts as enforcer of the rule of law and does this seemingly impartially, as also pointed out by de-colonial thinkers (see 3.3.). For the CSE/Open Marxists, by enforcing the rule of law, the state ultimately imposes 'the rule of the capitalist markets' (Burnham, 1990, p.182).

Next to law, the state also safeguards the rule of money, the most abstract form of capitalist property (Clarke, 1988, p.127). It guarantees 'the general *material* conditions for the accumulation of capital insofar as these conditions cannot be established by individual capitals in the capitalist way, since doing so would not yield a sufficient profit' (Heinrich, 2004, p.206). For determining these particular conditions, CSE/Open Marxists find the political representation of interests less relevant than Hirsch. For them, the state does not ensure the particular interest of particular capitals, as the general conditions are not necessarily suitable to every capital and might go against particular interests³⁷ (Bonefeld, 1992, p.123). Instead, they emphasise the notion of 'capital-in-general' (Burnham, 1990; Clarke, 1988), defined as

the totality of those characteristics which are common to all individual capitals (...) that is (...) ought to embrace those characteristics which have to be added to value in order for it to become capital (...) and which for this reason also become qualities of each individual capital (Heinrich, 1989, pp.65-66).

³⁶ On the one side, the worker is free to his labour-power, not being tied to a particular capitalist, on the other side, he is free from the means of production (Marx, 1872 [2011], p.170).

³⁷ This is close to Poulantzas' 'power bloc', the term he uses to describe the conglomerate of the different classes whose (political) interests are perpetuated by the state. It consists of a variety of fractions from capitalist class and other (economically) strong (fractions of) classes. The composition changes over time. Usually the interests found in the power bloc are not homogenous, but diversified – with the balance of power also varying over time.

From this follows that the state 'meets the interest of capital-in-general by enforcing the discipline of the market through the rule of law and the rule of money' (Burnham, 1990, p.182). Through its policies, the state, represented by its managers, follows the path of most profitable accumulation possible (Heinrich, 2004, p.206).

In this, as in Hirsch, the process of accumulation is seen as crisis-prone. Capital encounters barriers to the realisation of expanding capital and seeks to overcome barriers; for example, by developing new needs, intensifying exploitation, expanding the market, or revolutionising methods of production (Clarke, 1992, p.137). For the sake of its own reproduction, the state attempts, through its policies 'to remove barriers to accumulation' (Burnham, 1990, p.183). It 'filters and displaces struggles, *subordinating them to the process of value production*' (Clarke, 1991c, p.41, italics in the original).

Dinerstein sees the state as a 'mediation', that 'translates and integrates struggles into institutional, legal and political dynamics' (Dinerstein, 2015, p.20). This mediation can involve a restructuring of the state which shows that it is a 'transitory form of social relations' (Holloway, 1991, p.235). I thus expand Dinerstein's notion of mediation by referring to it as 'mediation in motion'.

Picciotto admits that it appears convenient to presume that social classes correlate with the state within society (Picciotto, 1991, p.217). However, capital accumulation cannot be understood in domestic terms and, hence, the state's character can hardly be seen as 'defined at the national level' (Clarke, 1992, p.136). Despite being politically constituted at the national level, capitalism is characterised by a global accumulation process (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.30).

National state(s) and global economy

Following Marx' notion of 'world market', accumulation is inherently global:

The constant tendency to develop productive forces (...) underlies the tendency of capital, from its earliest stages, to develop a world market and to generalise capitalist social relations of productions on a global scale (Clarke, 1992, p.135).

While capitalist society is global, states are based at the national level as 'forms of the global totality of social relation' that appear to exist territorially and politically autonomously (Holloway, cited by Dinerstein, 2017). This is a 'necessary' contradiction between the global, unified world market and the partial, fragmented international system (Clarke, 1991c).

The national state based on the 'principle of territoriality of jurisdiction' facilitates the global circulation of capital and commodities (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.27). At the domestic level, the conditions for exploitation are standardised through national law and policies and enforced by the state. In this, the rule of law and money is guaranteed, which transcends domestic legal systems and currencies (Clarke, 1992, p.136; Holloway, 1994). The national state is thus the domestic, political

underpinning of global capitalist relations (ibid., p.28). It follows that the state mediates not only national/domestic, but also international/global struggles.

The integration into, and position in, the global market, from which power and legitimacy of the state are derived, depends primarily on the growth of productivity (Clarke, 1992). Through the exchange rate mechanism states are interlocked into a 'hierarchy of price systems' (Burnham, cited by Bieler, 2006, p.75). Negative growth or growth stagnation with ensuing balance of payment difficulties and inflationary pressures, leads to loss of reserves, global exchange instability and financial crisis (Clarke, 1992). To anticipate this, the state tries to offer favourable conditions for foreign capital, which might in turn trigger domestic resistance. Hence, its individual stability is managed at the national level (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.27).

However, the state not only deals with (global) pressures to increase productivity within its territory, it must, at times, also handle over-accumulation and the rate of profits to fall, already mentioned by Hirsch. The global competition pressures capitalists to accumulate *ad infinitum*, leading them to replace labour with machinery, triggering the value of constant capital to increase and the value of (domestic) variable capital to drop. However, as labour power is the source of capitalist accumulation, and, hence, also of profit, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall occurs. An example for this is the crisis of the post-WW2 states, in which domestic labour had become too costly (Bonefeld, 2003).

Therefore, at the national level, state managers handle on the one side, the consequences of global class struggles and the pressures towards using the available resources more effectively and efficiently to increase productivity. In this, they are on the other side, constrained by internal resistance to increase productivity and also mediate domestic struggles and sometimes also respond to the power of labour (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1995a, p.3). The state managers might be able to handle domestic struggles, mobilise resources and change its political and economic relations with other states and by this, become temporarily better positioned in the global price hierarchy (ibid., p.28). Nevertheless, the state is incapable of resolving the crisis-ridden development of global capital. This is because the

driving force behind the state's attempt to restructure social relations is not so much the attempt to provide a resolution of 'economic crisis', as the attempt to resolve the 'political crisis' of the state by trying to disengage the state politically from the economic so as to depoliticise economic policy (Clarke, 1992).

This historical-materialist critique of the state offers illumination on the state as a 'node' in the global relations of capital mediating global and domestic struggles. It is a more nuanced perspective than the radical *dependistas* like Cardoso and Faletto (1979), who lack a concept of how the global/national is mediated (see 3.2.3). It allows insight into 'the internal relationship between economic and political forms of class relations', which is both, global-unified and fragmented-partial (Tsolakis, 2010, p.388).

Such perspective might offer an understanding of how and why contradictory tendencies have become apparent in the pluri-national scenario. With its emphasis on struggles, the CSE/Open Marxist approach seems promising to see the 'agency of indigenous peoples in restructuring, [...] determining, organizing and administrating their own development' (Walsh, 2008, p.511). Yet, with exceptions (see Dinerstein (2015)), the question of indigenous peoples, colonisation and 'coloniality' have not been addressed in the contributions to CSE/Open Marxism.

4.3.3. Reconsidering the question of '(de-)colonising' the CSE/Open Marxism approach

As mentioned above, post-colonial and subaltern scholars raised concerns about the applicability of applying Western approaches to other parts of the world. Mainly drawing on Chibber (2013), I rejected the idea of an alternative non-Western approach which accommodated binary thinking of the world. I subsequently proposed the notion of 'form' as a way of taking the post-colonial and subaltern critique seriously without triggering binary thinking. After having discussed the CSE/Open Marxist approach to the state as a political form, I return to considering to what extent this way of thinking the state reproduces coloniality or enables (de-)colonising thinking of the state.

Epistemological underpinning

The CSE/Open Marxist approach was developed as an 'attack on the dualism' between theorisation and practice (Holloway, 1995, p.166). With 'theories of something', people impose an abstract reality above the physical and social world, using 'arbitrary' concepts for classification (Holloway, 2005, p.106). This becomes particularly relevant in the case of the pluri-national state, which is underpinned by the idea of a *different* state. Given that it is an unprecedented experiment of applying those ideas into practice, it is highly problematic to work with a theorisation of the state that delineates a priori what is possible within 'an accepted framework of that's-the-way-things-are' (ibid., p.108). More generally, when dualism of social theory and practice is accepted, one fails to acknowledge that knowledge and therefore also theory production is 'a form of labour, done by specific groups of workers in specific social contexts' (Connell, 2014, p.212). Gunn challenges the wide-spread theory-practice dualism by asking: How can one know that the categories are valid or not? A meta-theory could help – but how would its categories be justified? This could lead to infinite repetition and regress (Gunn, 1994, p.54). One ultimately remains trapped in the limited horizon of capitalism-conformist theories, as it is capitalist society against which everything is 'measured' or 'operationalised'.

For Marx, 'the totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation (...) [to] which correspond definite forms of social consciousness' (Marx, 1857 [1975]). Theorisation and practice interact dialectically, that is, with a 'unity in theory and practice' (Psychopaidēs, 1992). This rejection of ego-less 'theories of' resonates with Mignolo's denunciation of

'arrogance and the dreams of universal solutions for all' that is implied in some Western bodies of knowledge that tell history from a modern perspective and omit coloniality (Mignolo, 2012).

An CSE/Open Marxist approach addresses 'the unity of what appears to be separate, the transitory nature of that which appears to be permanent, the untruth of appearance' (Holloway, 1995, pp.165-166). When critically engaging with social 'structures' like states, it is misleading to accept them as given, since this transforms them 'into eternal truth[s] that can be distorted by unwise political intervention, but can never be suppressed' (Clarke, 1991b, p.85). This disregards not only their 'parlous existence' (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1992a, p.xiii), but also their social character, that makes them operate as devices 'ordering social relations in a certain way' (Holloway, 1991, p.250). Challenging the 'state' as an 'object' is destructive, yet also demystifying and regenerative (Holloway, 2005, p.113). It implies resisting dehumanisation and naturalisation of capital and other fetishisms (Dinerstein, 2015, p.205).

This might also enable the denaturalising of the coloniality in/of the state, to which de-colonial scholars point. For this, it has to be possible to understand indigenous peoples' specificity and the pluri-national state, underpinned by the idea of a *different* state.

The capital relation, struggles and indigenous people

As stated in 3.2., Marx did not analyse the spread of capitalism in Latin America. However, when assessing the tensions between English and Irish workers, Marx found that subjective, yet real ideas, evoking racist and nationalist sentiments served as means through 'which workers who had common objective interests could also become mortal enemies' (Taylor, 2016, p.75). Therefore, racism and capitalism are not two separate themes, and so the struggle against them intersects (*ibid.*).

The dynamics of race in Latin America differ from British factories, since they primarily originate from colonisation. As in the case of nations, race is largely considered as socially constructed 'arbitrarily designated "inferiority"' (Dinerstein, 2016, p.58). Quijano (2000b) sees race as a mental construction expressing no more than the experience of colonial domination. For Wade, 'there is nothing "natural" about it [race], save the mere facts of phenotypical variation' (Wade, 1993, p.17).

Dinerstein suggests that in the transition from formal to real subsumption³⁸, this arbitrary inferiority of race became 'intrinsic to the valorisation of capital' (Dinerstein, 2015, p.55). Drawing on the notion of real subsumption extended by Italian Autonomists, and Negri (1992)³⁹ particularly, she shows a way

³⁸ With formal subsumption of labour, Marx refers to the processes in which, in early stages of the capitalist mode of production, capital imposes itself into an already existing labour process, but the worker is subjected to capital in an external way. Capital itself cannot develop on the limited basis it finds in the a priori production process. Capital, thus, gradually changes the social relations until they are subsumed to capital (see Murray, 2004).

³⁹ Cleaver summarises Negri's idea of self-valorisation as follows: it is 'a process of valorisation which is autonomous from capitalist valorisation—a self-defining, self-determining process which goes beyond the mere resistance to capitalist valorisation to a positive project of self-constitution' (Cleaver, 1992, p.129). See Nina (1992) for a summary.

of understanding 'coloniality' as an inherent part of the social relations of capital. It is hence not separate from capitalism, as Zavaleta's view of a motely society suggests. Indigenous peoples are connected to global society through a specific form of real subsumption, i.e. 'real subsumption by exclusion' (Dinerstein, 2015, p.55). Thus race-based oppression was 'a necessary condition for the formation of the working-class and the foundation and expansion of capitalist modernity in Latin America' (ibid.).

Indigenous struggle in, against and beyond capital is distinct in its coloniality component, which is not present in the struggle of non-indigenous peoples. As pointed out in 1.3., for indigenous peoples, autonomy as an emancipatory project is 'inevitably a decolonising project', mitigated against coloniality (Dinerstein, 2015, p.13). Gutiérrez Aguilar sees a 'dual intentionality' in Aymara struggles: On one side, the desire for recognition, on the other, the desire to be left alone (Gutiérrez Aguilar, cited by Dinerstein, 2015, p.54). This directly links to the indigenous struggle not for state power, associated with reproducing coloniality, but for a *different* state, that is, the pluri-national state (Quijano, 2006). However, the desire for recognition and rising demands for a *different* state, also raised the issue of participating in or taking state power. Therefore, indigenous struggles in, against and beyond the Bolivian Republic have been marked by deep contradictions.

Refining the CSE/Open Marxist approach

The notion of form does not imply that the state form has emerged or developed in a certain way. It offers instead a powerful tool for investigating the relations through which it evolves and the processes that underpin its transformation. As widely accepted, independent states in Latin America were formed through dynamics different from those of Europe. For the vast majority of the indigenous population, no major changes occurred when one elite replaced another, even though the states formally resembled the French and/or US model(s). De-colonial scholars seek to explain this by pointing out that the arrival and spread of Western modernity has a darker side: 'coloniality' (Mignolo, 2011; Grosfoguel, 2009). As indicated earlier (see 3.3.) the state was instrumental in obscuring indigenous epistemologies, and subsuming indigenous ways of life to the dominant, envisioned nation and excluding these people from public decision-making.

Following Fanon's argument that 'Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem' (Fanon, 1983), I propose that the state understood as 'mediation in motion' is not 'only' capitalist, but also deeply colonial. The CSE/Open Marxist critique suggests that the state is a real abstraction, so that the contradictory nature of the state remains in its conceptuality. Seeing the world in terms of struggles and adopting a rather broad understanding of struggles, enables seeing Bolivia as a highly complex 'arena where multiple and conflictive struggles are fought and

where knowledge is not just appropriated and recycled, but produced both in dominant and dominated languages and cultures' (Moraña *et al.*, 2008, p.16).

This approach has the potential to push towards decolonisation, which for Morgensen means 'challenging the settler academy' (Morgensen, 2012, p.805). By settler academy she means not all Western academy/ies per se, but, quoting Costas Vargas, the academy as 'long historical complicities in racial/colonial genocide' that naturalised and masked 'conditions in which these systems of massive violence are reproduced' (*ibid.*). The incorporation of indigenous struggles in their specificity and not making them invisible or re-constructing them, further helps in pushing towards a decolonisation of the CSE/Open Marxist framework more generally. After the analysis of the pluri-national state I return to the question of how far decolonising CSE/Open Marxism seems possible.

4.4. Methodological approach and research design

4.4.1. Form-analysis

The methodological approach to the state as a political form is a form-analysis that aims at understanding processes underpinning the 'mediation in motion'. Through form-analysis, hard reality of 'things' and 'facts', is dissolved 'into the flow of the changing forms of social relations' (Holloway, 1995, p.166).

In the form-analysis, the state can be unpacked further. Dinerstein (2015) speaks of 'institutional, legal and political dynamics' into which struggles are translated. Others suggest differentiation between existing apparatus or institutions/bureaucracy and the workers employed by the state (London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1980, p.59). I go further and propose to distinguish four main components of the state form into and through which demands are mediated:

- ❖ Basis (Constitution, Territory, Population)
- ❖ Rules (Legislation)
- ❖ Enforcing mechanisms (Administration, Judiciary, Police, Military⁴⁰)
- ❖ Government (strategy, discourse and direct action (policies)).

The existence of these components should not be taken for granted, which is particularly relevant for the unprecedented pluri-national state that was imagined as a different state. Yet, as far as I am aware, these components have so far appeared in every political state, including pluri-national Bolivia. When capital has a universalising tendency, then the state, as a political form of the social relations of capital, is composed of these seemingly universal(ised/ing) components.

⁴⁰ It is beyond the scope of this work to closely consider all mechanisms mentioned here. In the pluri-national state, I focus on the first two, since these are the ones that interact frequently with the autonomy regime.

In the ideal democratic state form imagined in liberal approaches, the basis is the most rigid or stable component, making change from inside and outside less likely or frequent, while government action and discourse are the most fluid. The other two are in-between in terms of stability. Yet, from a more critical perspective, advocated in this thesis, the seemingly universalising tendency does – as in the case of capital – not mean homogenisation of the processes and relations found in the state.

In line with this, form-analysis is less interested in how the components should look and interlink, but how they actually do and which processes underpin them. These four components do not exist independently from one another, but interrelate, and can be in tension with one another. Each component can embody contradictions. The dynamics of change, degree and exact loci of tensions can only be identified in a specific moment.

I acknowledge that writing and working with these components can potentially risk deepening the fetish and rigidifying the appearance of the state and its components as 'things'. Yet, I suggest that working with these components as an analytical model allows a more consistent analysis, which is crucial when encountering a multi-faceted matter. At the same time, unpacking the form also contributes to its demystification.

Neither CSE/Open Marxism nor de-colonial thought is associated with specific methods of data collection and analysis. Open Marxism is not seen by its founders as an empirical research programme (Dinerstein, 2017). Accordingly, those methods should be chosen that illuminate the processes underpinning the form. Subaltern and de-colonial thought started as critical challenge to strands of the post-colonial school which only partly moved beyond the mainstream approaches they criticised. Post-colonial scholars failed to give voice to the subalterns – but continued to speak about them (Spivak, 1988). From this, it follows that the research design should give voice to and not silence the subalterns and/or make them invisible. This is crucial in the push for decolonising CSE/Open Marxism.

4.4.2. Scope of form-analysis

Given the limited scope of this ambitious thesis, it is important to discuss what is within the realms of possibility. At a more general level, I focus in my analysis only on Bolivia and not on Ecuador. As stated in the beginning, both are pluri-national experiments, yet only Bolivia was formally turned into a pluri-national state and some other changes went further, most crucially, the autonomies. Therefore, Bolivia was selected. In the following, I further first outline how I approach the emergence and past developments of the form and secondly, pay attention to how to frame the analysis of the pluri-national state as result and object of struggles.

On periodisation

A form-analysis requires that historical processes of the social formation are reviewed (Gerstenberger, 1992). Simultaneously, key contemporary Bolivian intellectuals insist that pluri-national Bolivia can only be understood considering long-, medium and short-term memories (Svampa, 2007, p.6). Yet, how to approach within the scope of this thesis the Bolivian state associated with 'one of the more complex and fascinating of human history' (Klein, 2003, p.xi)?

Clarke (1992) establishes different periods for analysing the development of the state form. Yet, he proposes 'this periodisation only to knock it down', as with this, one cannot move beyond 'static fetishism of a simple "essentialist" structuralism' (ibid., p.149). It would reify the appearance of the state as a thing and pre-determined logics or functions (ibid., p.133). In a similar vein, Bonefeld *et al.* argue that

whoever divides history into "periods" (...), is thinking of form in a genus/species way. First of all, we have a global theory of social change, and then we have its specific, or conjunctural, deployment (Bonefeld et al., 1992a, p.xvii).

A periodisation would resemble the idea of stages of modes of production or capitalism, which closes down what is possible and promotes a dualist view instead of a unity of theorisation and practice (Bonefeld *et al.*, 1992b, p.xiv).

Clarke concludes that 'the capitalist mode of production can only be grasped as a complex totality' (Clarke, 1992, p.149) – is then every attempt to study a state form in the scope of a thesis doomed to fail? If CSE/Open Marxism is an approach that includes Holloway's 'scream' – the refusal to see how the world 'is' and is not – it should offer a way of voicing refusal and critically analysing the status-quo. 'Confronted with the fetishised world, all we can do is criticise' and insist that forms are 'neither self-evident nor eternal' (Holloway, 2005, pp.50-51).

Like other research designs and tools, a periodisation is a simplification. Allowing a systematic, consistent and coherent analysis that is easily accessible, is preferable to the development of a grand narrative. The use of a periodisation does not imply clear-cut boundaries or periods as subsequent stages following a pre-determined logic. One can still emphasise the historical specificity of the state and 'the transitory nature of that which appears to be permanent' (Holloway, 1995).

To avoid confusion and misleading terminology, I oppose the use of the term 'form' to label different periods (for example, neoliberal state form), but propose that 'political modalities' characterise specific periods, throughout which the form is the continuity, historically specific to the capitalist social relations. A political modality refers to a particular mode in and through which the form is expressed and experienced. The changing modalities are then expressions of the *transformation* in the political

sphere. A shift from one to another modality is expected to involve a rather rapid acceleration of motion, during which profound changes in usually at least two components or their interrelation occurs. In intra-periods, the motion is rather slow and less visible.

In retrospect, it becomes possible to establish a chronological order of political modalities, which is convenient for developing a consistent form-analysis. Yet, this does not imply that one sees modalities are 'stages' with one logically or necessarily leading to another. Such conclusive determinism is inappropriate since the outcome of struggles is necessarily open.

Autonomies as the entry point

Since the state is a real abstraction the starting point for the study of the state form is not the form itself, but the struggles that underpin its transformation. In the introduction, I argued that autonomy is at the heart of the pluri-national state idea, which at the same time distinguishes it from ideas around the (modern) nation state. Hence, the pluri-national transformation can best be understood through autonomy.

By studying emergence, development and translation of the key demand of indigenous peoples into and by the pluri-national state, it becomes possible to fully comprehend the contradictory tendencies in the pluri-national scenario. The figure of the AIOC ('Indigenous-Original-Peasant' Autonomy), established in the new constitution is perceived as crucial pillar of the pluri-national state.

In addition, studying the pluri-national state through struggles for self-determination, prevents from overemphasising or isolating indigenous struggles vis-à-vis non-indigenous struggles which is crucial in avoiding the triggering of binary thinking. The existing municipal autonomy and incorporation of departmental and regional autonomy into the new constitution indicate that autonomy is the Bolivian transformation not just a matter of indigenous peoples. Hence, autonomy appears at a conjuncture at which different struggles requiring mediation coincide.

In the analysis of previous state forms, I pay attention to the topic of autonomy, as this provides the background for the more recent struggles. The subsequent analysis deals more closely with the emergence of the pluri-national state idea in the second part of the 20th century and how these have entered the 2009 Constitution. This then enables me to see how demands have been translated in the pluri-national modality and how far this has altered struggles.

Regarding the development of demands for departmental autonomy, the focus is on Santa Cruz and Tarija, since actors from these departments are widely perceived as having taken the lead in the struggle. Yet, when investigating the pluri-national scenario, it is important to also include insights from other departments, which entered the pluri-national autonomy regime. The quests for regional

autonomy are closely associated with the hydrocarbon-rich Gran Chaco province in Tarija. Yet, I remain open to whether there are demands for regional autonomy elsewhere.

For the indigenous struggles for self-determination and autonomy, I strive to gain insight to the antecedents, emergences and development of the struggles, which differ from one part of Bolivia to another. When focusing on the pluri-national modality, I look at the overall development of the processes. In addition, I consider concrete cases of transitions towards state-recognised autonomy. To get a sense of different scenarios and dynamics, it is necessary to look beyond a single case. While acknowledging time constraints, I mostly draw on the experience of Charagua in the lowlands of Santa Cruz, the most advanced process, and Salinas de Garci Mendoza, situated in the highlands of Oruro. In addition, I remain open to other cases.

4.4.3. Research methods

Methods of data collection

To best understand the processes underpinning the form, in this study I triangulate different methods of data collection.

Secondary data collection

I collected a wide range of secondary data, including books, articles, and reports from local academics, analysts, NGO staff and think tanks. In addition, I gathered legal and policy documents and other state publications. Some were publicly available, others were provided by informants and interviewees.

Primary data collection: Interviews

To complement the rich secondary data, I collected primary data, mostly through elite and semi-structured interviews, that allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding of experiences and opinions in a way that stresses 'context over generalizability (...) and complexity over parsimony' (Rathbun, 2008, p.686). This resembles the orientation of the Open Marxist/de-colonial framework developed in the previous sections. Rather than simplifying, it opens up space for varying experiences. Conducting interviews is a good tool for gaining valuable insights into contested, sensitive topics. The autonomy regime is still new and is advancing day by day, so available up-to-date secondary data is limited to some extent.

The first interviews in each setting engaging interviewees selected for their perceived knowledge and influence, resembled what is widely described as 'elite' interviews. In this, 'elite' does not refer to a high social, economic, or political standing or self-identification with a particular class (Hochschild, 2009), but indicates a 'consultative relationship' (Gillham, 2000, pp.64-65). In this, the researcher is 'willing, and often eager to let the interviewee teach him what the problem, the question, the situation, is' (ibid., p.17). This approach, going hand in hand with a rather unstructured format, was

appropriate for these interviews, as it helped to avoid assumptions, which also supports decolonising data gathering. Having already identified key issues, in later interviews I followed a semi-structured approach, which facilitates more systematic data collection and crosscheck with already collected data (ibid., p.65). While keeping central themes constant, I still left space for new issues.

Identifying and accessing participants

When I arrived in Bolivia, I used my few initial contacts, approached some organisations and established more contacts through snowballing. Often, interviewees provided me with further contacts and others helped me out, too. When I went to a new place, I already had a list with contacts. Yet, I was also keen on ensuring that I had different access points to capture a variety of perspectives.

In the following table, the number of interviewees are listed in broad categories that reflect different parts of the study. Some of them fit into more than one category and I assigned them according to the perceived primary interview focus.

	Interview locations	No
<u>Struggles for autonomy</u>		
National (01/2015-06/2016) - (Former) political authorities, advisors - Think tank/ foundations - Academics - Consultants	La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Tarija	18
Departmental (01-03/2016; 05/2016) - (Former) political authorities, advisors - Civil Society Organisations - Academics	Santa Cruz, Tarija	18
Regional (02-03/2016) - (Former) political authorities - NGO Representatives - Civil Society Organisations	Tarija, Gran Chaco province	5
indigenous (11/2015-06/2016) - NGO Representatives - Civil Society Organisations	La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Tarija	9
<u>The pluri-national autonomy regime</u>		
National level	La Paz	7
Departmental (01-04/2016) - Political authorities, advisors - Representatives of civil society organisations - NGO Representatives	Santa Cruz Tarija Oruro (Potosí, Cochabamba)	31
Regional (02-03/2016) - Regional authorities - Other political authorities - NGO Representatives - Representatives civil society organisations	Gran Chaco province Entre Rios	12
Indigenous - Indigenous Authorities - Representatives civil society organisation - NGO Representatives - People from communities	Charagua (01/2016; 05/2016) Oruro (04/2016) Sucre (04-05/2016)	23
		123

Table 1: Sample of interviews

Sample

The average interview length was 75 minutes – yet, the rather spontaneous interviews with, for example, local authorities or representatives of civil society organisation tended to be shorter, while the scheduled appointments with academics, among others, were usually longer. The vast majority of the interviews were recorded with a dictation machine and notes were taken. When no recording was done, a memory protocol was written directly after the interview. 103 interviewees were male, while 20 were female. This ratio appears to largely reflect the ratio of people in the relevant positions.

Language

All but one⁴¹ of the interviews were conducted in Spanish. While this is not my native language, I had been fluent before going to Bolivia. The interviews with indigenous authorities or members of communities were also conducted in Spanish, often not the interviewees' native tongue. While this can be seen as problematic for data collection, I perceived it less problematic than working with a translator. The engagement of a third person is often regarded as negatively affecting the validity of the data (Kapborg and Berterö, 2002). Especially considering the short time I spent in communities and local areas, it was not possible to develop the necessary relationship of trust with a translator and detecting the dynamics between interviewee and translator sufficiently (see also 4.4.4.).

Arising challenges

The literature points to several challenges that arise when 'foreigners' conduct research. They are perceived as less capable of intuiting cultural aspects influencing answers (Herod, 1999, p.314). The data they collect is more prone to be affected by dishonesty or exaggeration from respondents and reluctance to answer controversial questions (Morris, 2009, p.206). To confront such challenges, I did my best to prepare thoroughly and to be culturally sensitive, also paying attention to collecting data from various sources as suggested by Morris (2009). Berry (2002) recommends that the researchers should seek to be as neutral as possible, but (s)he should be aware that complete neutrality is impossible. I also treat the interview data not as 'true facts', but as subjective reflections.

It 'should not be presumed that an "insider" will necessarily produce "better" knowledge than will an "outsider" simply by dint of their positionality' (Herod, 1999, p.313). Since the social relation between interviewee and interviewer interferes with the data collection process, consciously or not, not only truth, but authenticity always appears as an 'unattainable goal' (McNeill and Chapman, 2005, p.6).

I experienced gender and age difference as important in the data collection process. In some situations, especially when interviewing lowland elites and (former) political authorities, I felt I was

⁴¹ One interview was conducted in German, the native language of the interviewee.

being lectured, yet this perceived role often gave me the chance to ask for further clarification. Additionally, I found my status as a female German⁴² opened a variety of doors, some of which might have remained closed to a Bolivian conducting such research.

Primary data collection: Events

The research is also informed by events I attended in Bolivia. Among them, an assembly of the National Coordinator of AIOC (CONAIOC) and the hemispheric summit of the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Municipal Associations (FLACMA) in May 2016. Those observations were important for collecting data on the AIOC, as it was impossible to visit many of them. At these events, indigenous authorities from different places that undergo transition towards AIOC were present; I could talk to them and also observe interactions between them, ministry personnel and consultants.

Methods of data analysis

Before starting the data analysis, I decided to subdivide the form-analysis into four part, to each of which I dedicate a chapter: First, the historical background; secondly, the emergence and development of struggles for autonomy and how these entered the 2009 Constitution; thirdly, the translation of the autonomies at the central state level; fourthly, the pluri-national autonomy regime beyond the central state and the redirection of struggles. These parts fulfil different purposes and have varying emphases, which I will explain below in more detail. As shown in the following table, the type of collected data prioritised varies from chapter to chapter:

Chapter	Types of data
Chapter 5 – Previous political modalities	Secondary data (books, articles) Official documents (legal and government) Interviews
Chapter 6 – Struggles for autonomy	Secondary data (books, articles) Interviews Official documents (legal and government)
Chapter 7 – The pluri-national state– translation of autonomies into and by central state components	Official documents (legal and government) Interviews/ observation notes Secondary data (books, articles)
Chapter 8 – The pluri-national state –autonomy regime and redirection of struggles	Official documents (legal and government)/ Interviews/ observation notes Secondary data (books, articles)

Table 2: Types of data

Such flexibility of using different types of data throughout the analysis is crucial for understanding both the struggle-driven motion of the state form and mediation of struggles into and through the state form. This enabled me to organise and then systematically assess my data. As seen in the table,

⁴² Some indigenous people and NGO and state employees told me about the work of and with German NGOs, development cooperation, volunteers or researchers. In Santa Cruz and Tarija, interviewees and other people I met, told me about their German ancestors.

throughout, I relied on both primary and secondary data. In the following, I first show how I prepared the interview data and then demonstrate how I analysed the data per chapter.

Preparation of interview data

First, I classified the interviewees according to location, political affiliations and profession which offers no more than a first simplifying edit, but is crucial for ensuring a balanced analysis, which considers different perspectives. In a second step, the interviews were clustered according to the major focus of interview (see Table 1) – yet, some were marked as belonging to more than one cluster, following which different interview sections were later considered for data analysis in diverse parts.

Once the interviews were organised following these basic categories and clusters, I revised around ten per cent of the interview material (balancing the above-mentioned classifications and focus of the interview) for the different parts of the form-analysis, which are the struggles for autonomy (Chapter 6) and the pluri-national scenario (Chapter 7 and 8). While revising, I had the following questions in mind:

- ❖ For the struggles for autonomy: What are the key aspects and moments, interviewees bring up with regards to the struggles for 'autonomy' that shed light of the meaning of autonomy and the development of struggles and how this relates to the (capitalist/colonial) state?
- ❖ For the pluri-national state: Which crucial aspects and concerns do interviewees raise with regards to the autonomy regime and redirected struggles for autonomy in pluri-national Bolivia and how does this relate to the (capitalist/colonial) state?

Based on this careful reading, I developed a list of categories and sub-categories, allowing the data to speak. In addition, I crosschecked if the categories could answer my inquiry; no major inconsistencies emerged. This means that I established the categories and sub-categories in an inductive-deductive way. Based on the list of categories and sub-categories, I developed the codes. After having done some pilot coding to moderate the categories and codes, I coded all interview material, using NVivo.

This strategy was chosen for its potential to create a balance between framework- and data-driven analyses. Yet, a short-coming with the chosen approach might have been that I was the only one involved in the coding. A second person could have helped to balance out my own biases towards the data, which are also related to me remembering the interviewees and interviews.

Data analysis

While preparing the interview data, I revised other pieces of data, which was mostly secondary data. I organised these with regards to their relevance for the different parts of the study and used excel sheets for systematisation. Through this, in combination with the interview material, I established a large, fairly organised body of data on which my analysis is based. In the following, I show my procedure for data analysis, which was driven by the main purpose of each part of the study:

Chapter 5

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to provide an analysis of the emergence and *transformation* of the Bolivian state, which follows the developed Open Marxist-decolonial framework and situates the idea of and struggle for the pluri-national state and its *formation* in a historical context. For this contextualisation, it is important to pay attention to issues of self-determination and autonomy, which lie at the heart of the pluri-national idea. Here, following a chronological order appears most convenient. Following the elaborations in 4.4.2., I identified different political modalities, enabling a consistent analysis, which can be accessed relatively easy. I suggested that the shift from one modality to another is a rapid acceleration of motion, in which deep changes in (usually) at least two components of the state form or their interrelation takes place.

Hence, identifying the modalities involved reviewing different accounts of Bolivian history and finding moments of rapid motion. I identified seven political modalities pre-dating the pluri-national one. Having established these modalities, I looked more deeply into the data exploring how the emergence and development of the Bolivian state form, as result of past and object of present struggles, had unfolded. In this, I looked at how the state mediates struggles from domestic sectors of society (indigenous and non-indigenous) and external pressures and what appeared mainly to have driven the transition from one modality to another. With regards to the reorganisation, I sought to identify how much of the form underwent changes and how much continued, which meant looking more closely at the different components and their interrelation. Yet, given the limited scope, I cannot fully cover the Bolivian history and accurately reflect all different perspectives. Rather I aim to demonstrate key moments and general characteristics and dynamics.

Chapter 6

The next part of the form-analysis is to analyse the emergence and development of the struggles for autonomy and looking at how they entered the 2009 Constitution. I seek to understand how far these struggles have changed over time and how far they are or have become capitalist/colonial.

It is, as in the previous chapter, convenient to follow a mostly chronological order. For this, I revised the relevant interview material and secondary data and initially developed a chronology of key events. I looked for key themes that came up in the different struggles for autonomy – what did autonomy mean in relation to the (neoliberal) capitalist and colonial colouring of the state? How did the agenda change and how does this relate to the state form that mediates the struggles? In answering these questions, my interview data provided valuable insights. This was also complemented by relevant secondary material.

The second part then requires analysis of the processes through which the different sets of struggles came together and became *informed* into the pluri-national Constitution: How were the struggles negotiated and why did they enter state matter? How far can capitalist/colonial traits be identified? I followed a chronological order and relied on different available accounts, seeking to understand not only the vision of individuals from either side, but also different sides of the spectrum.

As in Chapter 5, the scope of this chapter is severely limited and I am not capable of offering a detailed description of many events. I rather show the overall development and go in detail where I perceive it as necessary.

Chapter 7 and 8

The purpose of the final part of the form-analysis is to unpack the pluri-national scenario and see, how the struggles for autonomy have become mediated into and by the pluri-national scenario. This means, on one hand how the state form and its (central state) components have translated the constitutionally established autonomy regime. On the other hand, it requires looking at how this affected the struggles, for example, how they became redirected.

The most convenient structure was to have the one chapter on the central level and the other one on the autonomy regime beyond the central state and the redirection of struggles. Separate the translation of departmental and regional autonomies and AIOC into different chapters, would have led to an analysis that made it harder to see those as belonging to the same scenario and also, to treat the issue of coloniality as a matter that rather belongs to the indigenous peoples' autonomies instead of to the entire pluri-national state.

In Chapter 7, which looks at the translation of newly recognised autonomy regime by the central state, I pay close attention to the four components of the form, each of which I assess by looking at different data:

- ❖ Basis: Constitution
- ❖ Central state rules: legal documents, complemented with interview data
- ❖ Central state enforcing mechanisms: observation, interview data, legal documents
- ❖ Central state government: strategy documents, policy documents, budget data, discourse, complemented by reports and local scholarship, newspaper articles⁴³, interview data

For understanding their interrelation, I relied on legal and policy documents (for example, supreme decrees). Yet, for the more informal dynamics, the analysis is primarily based on interview data that covers distinct perspectives. With this chapter, I seek to understand how this pluri-national central state translation is capitalist/colonial.

⁴³ In particular, for post-fieldwork events, I reference newspaper articles.

Chapter 8 assesses what has happened in the pluri-national state with the different demands for autonomy beyond the central state. The key concern is in how far there is (no) deeper sub-sumption to capitalism/coloniality. For each of the three new types of state-recognised autonomy, I address in the first part the formal procedures and advancements, which requires looking at legal documents, and similar, which are complemented with secondary and interview data. The second part looks at the redirection of struggles and, since these are generally open, I approached this part more openly and flexibly than the earlier one. In this, I rely more on interview data that I let speak for itself.

4.4.4. Ethics

As the researcher undertaking this project, I was responsible for engaging with all people involved in a sensitive, honest and respectful way, meeting the principles and standards, written down in the 'Code of good practice in research integrity' of the University of Bath (2014). Since I also aimed to move towards decolonising the approach and integrating indigenous voices, I paid attention to further principles that researchers have found crucial for conducting research in a way which is 'respectful and ethically sound from an Indigenous perspective' (Louis, 2007, p.130). In what follows, I first briefly engage with the key ethical principles and the move on to the more specific ones, which relate to conducting research in a decolonising way.

Avoidance of deception, presentation of purpose of study

I explained clearly the purpose of my study to all interviewees. This included providing them with a two-page information sheet and a business card, and showing a letter from my supervisor. When being asked, I said, I would talk to other people, but did not mention names. I sought to adapt to different settings, where social interaction involved different ways of communication. Being concerned with decolonising the research process, it was crucial to make clear that I was not 'studying' my interviewees. Instead, I wanted to learn from them.

Obtaining consent, including right to withdraw, arrangements for de-briefing, post-interview access

Initially, I had planned to let interviewees signed the information sheet to express their consent. However, I quickly realised that this caused irritation and scepticism, and seemed to engender mistrust. After having consulted some locals on this matter, I decided to not ask for a signature but to give the adjusted information sheet and asked for verbal consent. I also highlighted their right to withdraw. After the interviews, I offered post interview de-brief and provided post-interview access.

Avoidance of distress or threats to self-esteem

Researching the state and conflicts is highly contentious and potentially emotional. To avoid harm, I posed questions in a sensitive way and did not continue to ask questions when I felt someone became uncomfortable. I explained to all interviewees that in addition to their right to withdraw, they could

choose not to answer specific questions and I did my best to create an environment in which interviewees felt safe and confident. This usually involved letting the interviewees decide where to meet. Most interview situations involved only me and the interviewee⁴⁴.

Privacy and confidentiality

I handled the collected data confidentially. The audio-files were not named after the participants and after transcription, they were deleted. In the transcription process, I had support from some Bolivian students, with whom I have a trusting relationship, and who were unfamiliar with the research topic. I distributed the files in the 'safest' way possible, considering their background and made repeatedly clear to them, that the content of interviews is confidential. Particularly controversial interviews or where interviewees wanted to be anonymous, I transcribed myself.

Most interviewees did not want to be anonymised. However, the situation for critical thinkers in research institutes, NGOs and the enforcing mechanisms has become increasingly difficult in recent years. An illustrative example is the eviction of the CEDIB in April 2017 (Hill, 2017). I therefore decided to anonymise the interviewees to avoid possible harm. Initially, I thought of just anonymising those had wished it and those I perceived as 'at risk'. Yet, I quickly felt insecure about where to draw the line and uncomfortable with treating the interviewees differently. I therefore decided to anonymise all and label them solely with numbers in the thesis.

Additional consideration for working with indigenous peoples

Since I also work with indigenous peoples and sought to work towards decolonising CSE/Open Marxism, I paid close attention to the challenges arising in this context and sought to tackle them respecting specific ethical criteria (see 4.4.4.). These include the respect for indigenous regulations, critical self-reflection, respectful representation and reciprocal appropriation (Smith, 1999). Yet, given the overall approach to the subject matter, it became clear that the research could not involve using what the literature calls 'indigenous methodologies' (for example, Louis, 2007; Rigney, 1999).

As stated above, I quickly realised that the way I set up the research project, did not allow to be underpinned by an indigenous methodology, more commonly used in anthropology (Purcell, 1998). For example, I could not give much space to peoples for defining or determining my overall research agenda and I cannot claim that my indigenous contacts were 'partners in theorising' (Louis, 2007, p.135).

⁴⁴ When visiting the Gran Chaco, I was accompanied by a student, who had been working in the study community JAINA in Tarija, a local research community. The student, originating from and familiar with the setting, helped with facilitating some contacts. I conducted all interviews, in some interview situations, she was present when the interviewee was fine with it.

Initially, I had planned to conduct focus groups in local communities, which is a method, often used in research with indigenous people. Benefits include potential empowerment of the participants, who might not only feel more comfortable in a group, but identify commonalities and experience a strengthening of bonds (Smylie *et al.*, 2009). For the researcher, it also becomes possible to intuit the interaction between individuals, which can also enrich the data. Yet, the selection of participants requires, and heavily relies on, the researchers' knowledge about the community (ibid., pp.438-439). I quickly sensed in the field that communities in Charagua appeared divided and politicised, which was confirmed by my local informants. As I was unable to spend enough time in the communities to fully understand the dynamics, I felt focus groups were inappropriate. Additionally, I was concerned with biases that might be reflected in the data that I could not see and felt incapable of evaluating the implications of focus group discussions for individual members and sought to prioritise avoidance of distress and harm. I shared these concerns with key informants and was recommended individual interviews.

A common argument in the literature on indigenous methodologies is that non-indigenous scholars like me are incapable of decolonising research, since the 'Indigenous people themselves must analyse and critique epistemologies that are commonplace in higher education' (Rigney, 1999, p.110). Yet, against this, Louise (2000) points out that '[c]reating methodologies that only apply to Indigenous researchers provides fodder for more essentialist arguments', which resonates with my earlier made argument against binary thinking.

Decolonising research does not imply a general rejection of all Western research and knowledge. Indeed, indigenous peoples in Bolivia, concerned with the advancement of the state-recognised autonomies, were interested in understanding the formal procedures and arising challenges, which involves engaging with Western knowledge. As Smith points out, decolonising research for indigenous people is less related to abandoning non-indigenous methodologies altogether, but more about changing the focus, meaning 'centering our concerns and worldviews and coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes' (Smith, 1999, p.39).

In conversations with people in rural communities I often asked what Living Well (*Vivir Bien*) meant for them and most of them replied 'infrastructure, jobs, and education for the kids' – a concern with decolonisation was uncommon. This clearly indicates, as argued earlier in this chapter, that indigenous people are not outside capital or modernity, while they might be concerned with their traditions and the cosmologies they inherited. It can hence not be appropriate that decolonising research means neglecting this and maybe overemphasising culture and similar.

The aforementioned interest in state-recognised autonomies helped that knowledge sharing went both ways, which is another key principle associated with establishing an ethical research relationship with indigenous people (Louis, 2007, p.135). When having conversations with indigenous authorities, for example, I was asked for advice several times with regard to the conversion process. In these cases, I shared with them what I knew about the formal procedures and experiences in other places and we had conversations about their hope and concerns. Yet, I did not give advice on what to do within the communities, since I did not feel entitled to do this and also said so.

During my stays in communities and in the conversations with indigenous people, I sought to build appropriate relationships. This meant acting in ways I perceived as open and sensitive, for example, not giving promises I could not keep. I was aware of my limited ability to access and understand other cosmologies or traditions that were alien to me – but I did my best to be an attentive learner and a curious, patient listener. The limitations of accessing other worlds became obvious with my inability to understand native languages other than Spanish. As already pointed out in the section on interviews, I nevertheless decided not to work with translators, which was similarly motivated as the decision not to conduct focus group interviews.

4.5. Summing-up

In this chapter, I developed the epistemological-theoretical framework, methodological approach and research design that underpin the analysis of state transformation in Bolivia, found in the following chapters. I first engaged with post-colonial and subaltern critique, emphasising the need to raise awareness of a colonisation/coloniality of knowledge. I argued that this should not lead to a binary thinking of the world and categories like the state, since this risks triggering a problematic, misleading assessment of the world.

In the second part, I suggested that the notion of 'form' has the potential for taking the concerns of post-colonial and subaltern thinkers seriously without leading to binary thinking. At the same time, this notion seems open enough for making sense of the specificity of the pluri-national idea and the contradictory tendencies in pluri-national Bolivia. After reviewing the evolution of the notion of form, I suggested that the CSE/Open Marxist approach is most promising, according to which the state is the political form of the social relation of capital. Closing this part, I pointed out that the CSE/Open Marxist approach requires refinement when wanting to understand parts of the world, which were colonised in the past. Yet, such a push towards decolonising the CSE/Open Marxist approach, supported by decolonial ideas, seems possible within its own epistemological frame. I will reflect on this later in this thesis.

The final part revolved around the methodological approach and study design. I engaged with the fundamentals and scope of the form-analysis. In this, I argued first, that I would only look at Bolivia as the only pluri-national state, in a strict sense. Secondly, I suggested conducting the historical analysis through different political modalities. Finally, I proposed autonomy as an entry point for the analysis of pluri-national state. Based on this, I suggested suitable research methods and identified ethical considerations and challenges. In particular, I paid attention to the question of decolonising research (methodologies).

Chapter 5: A periodisation of previous political modalities

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the emergence and development of the Bolivian state form, which I see as a result and object of struggles. In this, the state is not so much 'an impregnable seal' but 'a thin crust on a seething, bubbling soup' (Holloway, 1991, p.238). Following in chronological order, I establish seven different political modalities (see 4.4.3.) that predate the pluri-national state. These changes can become necessary due to internal demands that cannot be accommodated, state managers' concerns with profitable accumulation and/or other external pressures. Through these modalities, the *transformation* is expressed in the political sphere and changes in the central state components (see 4.4.1.) can be identified. As explained in 4.4.2., this is not to reify the appearance of the state as a 'thing' or establish different stages in the pre-determined or logical development of the state, but serves to organise the messiness. A consistent analysis is crucial when covering more than 500 years of Bolivian history.

This analysis seeks to shed light on the historical dimension on the idea of and struggles for the pluri-national state and looks at how the state form has evolved and how this has related to self-determination and autonomy. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to look in depth at aspects related to the Church or religion more generally, bureaucracy, workers movements or military-government relations, among others, which have been important in Bolivian history. Yet, these have not been closely entwined with the demands for self-determination and autonomy that have brought about and shaped the pluri-national state.

5.2. Pre-colonial times and the *ayllu*⁴⁵

The starting point of this analysis is the context in and through which the first political modality emerged. The Spanish conquest, which began 1524 and was mostly complete in 1533, was without doubt a key moment in history. Yet, it is by no means the beginning of history, which would mean ignoring, for example, the highly advanced and civilised Tiwanaku culture⁴⁶, the Inca Empire and other smaller cultures in the highlands, lowlands and valleys (Gisbert, 2003a). With the final great expansion of the Inca Empire, the former central part of the Tiwanaku Empire came under the reign of the ancestors of today's Quechua people. Yet Inca rule was largely indirect and the highland communities,

⁴⁵ Since 'there was no state' (Interview 5) in the lowlands until the second half of the 20th century, the first sections mainly deal with the highlands and valleys of what became Bolivia.

⁴⁶ Tiwanaku developed from a small rural village into an expansionist empire that lasted for at least 600 years. Trade functioned as medium and the elite controlled the food surplus, which was crucial in the central region of the empire on around 4000 m AMSL. Researchers are not entirely sure what brought the empire to fall in the 12th century (Stanish, 2003). It is potentially associated with a drought, leading the food surplus dried up and internal conflicts (ibid., pp.11-12; Gisbert, 2003a, pp.29-30).

especially, remained largely autarkic (Gisbert, 2003a, pp.34-36; Lessmann, 2010, pp.57-60). The earlier rebellions against Inca rule also contributed to this and 'a mosaic of political structures, religions, and languages' was maintained and integrated 'into a vast nonmarket exchange system' (Klein, 2003, pp.19;23).

The pre-conquest territorial organisation was marked by the presence of *ayllus*. This is a flexible denomination for a community, which partly rests on imagined, partly on concrete kinship that usually involves ritual practices, political activities, access to communal land and is based on common ancestors (Choque and Mamani, 2001). In the *ayllu*, all relations should be in harmony with everything, which includes Mother Earth and the Cosmos, and if there is disequilibrium, it has tragic consequences for all (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010, p.53). Back then, *ayllu* was not 'defined by a single residential community' (Klein, 2003, p.22), but consisted of members in the different ecological zones, enabling temporary use of land in these zones (Gisbert, 2003a, p.32). This 'inter-zonal symbiosis' was crucial for compensating climatic and geographic limits (Vargas Rivas, 2013, pp.31-32) and helped to secure an overall balance of power (Lessmann, 2010, p.28). To ensure an adequate occupation of territory, a complex and dynamic network of social organisations was in place, which consisted of largely unwritten rules and norms, based on the principles such as reciprocity and redistribution in which autonomy was key (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.32). The authorities, who enacted and safeguarded these rules, were obliged to serve the community and could usually be removed by the community (ibid.).

5.3. The colonial modality: From primary resources to primary globalisation

The emergence of the colonial modality occurred in the context of the global expansion of commercial capital which accompanied the rise of mercantilist political modality in Europe (Clarke, 1992, p.137). In the time of America's *discovery*, European powers needed silver, as European seams were exhausted, which posed a threat to the production of the means of payment in commercial deals (Galeano, 1971 [2009], p.12). Hence, the conquest was largely – yet not exclusively – motivated by the precious metals found in early expeditions (ibid.). The Andean highlands soon turned into a crucial source of minerals and food for colonial Spain (Klein, 2003, p.23).

The Spanish quickly began building a system that was designed to facilitate large-scale exploitation of natural resources. Only 14 years after the discovery of great silver resources close to the soon to be founded town of Potosí, the *Audiencia de Charcas*⁴⁷ was established in 1545 (De Mesa *et al.*, 2003, pp.117-118; 155-157). It was administered from today's Sucre⁴⁸ and had the key aim of facilitating

⁴⁷ It had jurisdiction over Upper Peru, today's Paraguay, Uruguay and northern Argentina. In the 16th century, the *Audiencia* was divided into La Plata y La Paz.

⁴⁸ Back then, the town was founded as Ciudad de la Plata de Nuevo Toledo. It was later renamed as Charcas, then Chuquisaca and is today known as Sucre, honouring the Venezuelan independence leader and 2nd Bolivian president.

silver exploitation in Potosí, just 50 miles away. In the 1570-1650 boom, the *Cerro Rico* (Rich Mountain) accounted for more than half of silver production in the so-called 'New World' (Klein, 2003, p.50). In this, the demand for wheat, maize and coca leaves for the mine workers rose and the land used for such purposes increased. Hence, also farmers, who often had Western roots, gained from the boom, which in turn attracted more settlers.

From encomiendas to reducciones: An unequal reciprocity pact

The *conquistadores* found different structures in the highlands: a rather rigid centralism from the Inca Empire, the partly intact *ayllu* structures and some smaller cultures (Lessmann, 2010, p.68). To ensure access to labour power and territory, they developed the *encomienda* system, in which the pre-conquest *ayllus* were generally retained as part of territorial colonial state organisation, that consisted of larger districts and smaller *encomiendas* (Klein, 2003, p.34). The Spanish King assigned large plots of land, *encomiendas*, to his countrymen (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.33). The *encomenderos* were the de facto 'governing authority in their regions', who ensured the evangelisation of his indigenous, their alimentation and clothes (Klein, 2003, p.34). The indigenous worked in turn on the land, built houses and acted as domestic servants on the *encomienda* and were in turn paid a small salary and allowed some freedom for territorial, political and cultural organisation (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.33). Hence, they were not enslaved, but included as 'free men' (De Mesa and Gisbert, 2003a, p.209). In the emerging 'reciprocity pact of the colonial state', indigenous people were allowed a degree of autonomy in return for their tributes and labour as long as it did not disrupt the *encomienda* system (Platt, 1982, p.100). It was not a pact between equal partners and the indigenous people were subordinated to the *encomenderos*, and were, for example, obliged to pay tributes with their salary (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.33).

The *encomienda* system was largely based on indirect rule, in which higher level indigenous authorities, recognised as *caciques*⁴⁹, operated as 'hinges' between communities and the Crown's *corregidor*⁵⁰ (Albó, 2009a, p.23; De Mesa and Gisbert, 2003a, p.203). In return for being 'confirmed in their rights' and being granted some privileges, the *caciques* collected the tributes for Crown, Church and often also for themselves (Klein, 2003, p.34). In this, the colonisers had opted for preserving and using the existing structures to subordinate the indigenous people at lowest cost (ibid., p.35).

Over time, important challenges arose: Firstly, with the severe decline in the indigenous population due to the spread of European diseases and the harsh working conditions, the *encomienda* system became less profitable. Secondly, local Spanish nobility started to emerge, which displeased the

⁴⁹ This denomination originates from the Caribbean.

⁵⁰ The *corregidor* is at the lowest level of colonial authority and was, also due to poor transportation and communication conditions, often very powerful.

Spanish Crown (ibid.). Thirdly, in the mining sector, the number of required wage-labourers increased together with maintenance costs, while capital for increasing mining output was lacking. Reforms were enacted to respond to these challenges and those adopted under Viceroy Francisco de Toledo (1571-73) marked a turning point in the colonial experience.

Key in addressing the first two challenges was the law of '*reducciones*' (De Mesa *et al.*, 2003, p.144). Following the model of the Mediterranean agricultural community, the dispersed indigenous population should be concentrated ('*reduced*') into fixed colonial villages (Klein, 2003, p.36). By this, it was sought to eliminate the 'ecological niches' (Platt, 1982), which were still under the control of Andean peoples and facilitated their self-subsistence (Delgado, 2002, p.97). By enhancing direct control, it was hoped to make the Crown's tribute system more effective and efficient. Even though *haciendas*, which are large estates, also emerged in the Yunga valleys, the peoples' control over the niches did not end. Although the overall success of the '*reducciones*' was limited, nevertheless 'by and large, the system (...) eventually became dominant in the Andes' (Klein, 2003, p.36). Tackling the third challenge, the most drastic reform⁵¹ was the use of pre-Conquest mandatory community service (*Mit'a*). It was used to secure the flow of cheap labour to the mines while also weakening the communities' autonomy (De Mesa *et al.*, 2003, p.121; De Mesa and Gisbert, 2003a, pp.209-210). With these measures, the aforementioned challenges were – largely at the cost of indigenous people – successfully confronted in the medium-term. Yet, they could not prevent the 17th century silver mining crisis.

Economic downturn, costly wars, bourbon reforms and unintended outcomes

After 1650, mining outputs dropped steeply and by the end of the century, the Mexican mining industry outperformed the Andean one (Klein, 2003, p.60). This crisis affected not just the mining sector, but the entire market, including *haciendas* producing for the mining sector (De Mesa and Gisbert, 2003a, p.212). For the indigenous population, this resulted in less pressure on their territories and declining *Mit'a* obligations (Klein, 2003, p.63), which is why the communities could regain some strength and the population started growing again.

In the 18th century, global competition increased, capitalist relations started expanding and profound transformations took place in the Andes (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.36). The Crown, under the house of Bourbon – involved in costly wars in Europe⁵² – was in increasingly desperate need of capital; furthermore, the influence of the 'proud New World nobility' was a thorn in the Crown's flesh (Skidmore and Smith, 2005, p.22). In the Bourbon reforms, which aimed at building 'modern fiscal-

⁵¹ Toledo also enacted the first basic mining law, addressing the increasingly complex mine ownership in Potosí. It affirmed the Crown's claims for ownership of subsoil and obliged miners to give the Crown 20 per cent of outputs (Klein, 2003, p.38).

⁵² Key were the Seven Years' War, the wars with Britain and France and the involvement in the French Revolution.

military state' (Allen, 2011, p.83), taxes were raised, trade laws imposed and monopolies created, all of which were designed to support the Bourbon's war economy. In addition, tributes were expanded to all indigenous people, regardless of their land access status. With the aim of making tax collection from indigenous people more efficient and effective, the reciprocity pact between colonised and colonisers crumbled, since *caciques* were no longer recognised (Albó, 2009a, p.24). Appointed creole intendants, replaced the *corregidores*, who were directly in charge of tribute collection and allocation (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.34).

Superficially, the reforms appeared a success for the Crown since between 1778 and 1784, the returns to Spain rose by 1,528 per cent (Fowler, 2002, p.10) and the tribute turned into the second most important source of income for the Crown (Klein, 2003, p.71). However, it also triggered further resistance: First, some creoles, particularly those who had benefitted in pre-Bourbon times, started 'to exert its independent interests' (Munck, 2012, p.24). Such rising 'creole patriotism' led to unwillingness to 'subsidise wars in which they had no interest' and to obey, more generally, the Crown's rules (Fowler, 2002, pp.10;12).

Secondly, despite or precisely because of the relative relaxation of the indigenous population's exploitation, 'that population remained bitterly opposed to its overlords' (Klein, 2003, p.73) and the tributes were 'an obligation without political rights and without citizenship' (Tapia Mealla, 2015, p.10, author's translation). The dissatisfaction found expression in the 1780-1783 revolts (Albó, 2009a, p.24). In Upper Peru, today's Bolivia, the most famous uprising of indigenous people took place in 1781 and was led by Julian Apaza 'Túpac Katari' and Bartolina Sisa (De Mesa and Gisbert, 2003b, pp.275-279). After having laid siege to La Paz, demonstrating the indigenous people's regained strength, the uprising was brutally defeated (Klein, 2003, p.77).

Struggles for independence in the context of 'primary globalisation'

The experience of revolt in Bolivia, the recent American Independence War and the French Revolution, raised some creoles' consciousness that independence was possible and would enable the exercise of self-determination (Albó, 2009a, p.24). The Spanish defeat at Trafalgar and Napoleon's occupation of Madrid triggered further revolts (Gisbert, 2003b, p.309). This initially led to the formation of some short-lived government juntas⁵³ and in July 1809, *mestizo* Murillo declared Bolivia's independence in La Paz. Subsequently, Spanish fought against Spanish(-Creoles), while the indigenous, black and *mestizo* populations were used by both sides (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010, p.20). After 30 years of conflict over independence⁵⁴ and the formation of most Latin American states, a constituent assembly

⁵³ 1809 was a key year with the Chuquisaca and La Paz Revolutions (Gisbert, 2003b, pp.315-319).

⁵⁴ Gisbert (2003b) offers a detailed description of events.

declared independence in Chuquisaca in August 1824. Shortly afterwards, the assembly honoured Simón Bolívar by naming the new country Bolivia. Understanding independence through rising 'creole patriotism' and desires for self-determination points to an important aspect of the process, yet, the changing relations of production on the world stage should not be overlooked.

Independence is also to be seen as largely 'determined by the needs of the development of Western or, more precisely, capitalist civilization' (Mariátegui, 1971, p.7). With the emergent industrial revolution in the West, needs started changing, particular in Britain, where capital was increasingly penetrated into industrial production (Clarke, 1992). Through the facilitation of 'free' trade, exports of products and import of cheap raw materials, metals and food, the increasingly prominent liberal paradigm led by Victorian England responded to these needs⁵⁵ (Mariátegui, 1971). It also opened the door to investment in other parts of the world through which capital could be absorbed.

Against this background, the Bolivian state emerged as a moment of struggles against the Crown's domination that controlled the colonial state in a way that was increasingly a barrier to accumulation. The expanding force of global capital or 'primary globalisation' (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.36) coincided with the interests of the creole elite, which sought autonomy from the Crown (Mariátegui, 1971, p.8). Their profits were largely tied to exports, since not much 'domestic' industry existed, which was not directly related to exports. While the 'political' state CSE/Open Marxists describe, emerged as a moment of class struggles triggered by changing relations of production at the domestic level, the emergence of the independent Bolivian state is to be seen more in the context of external and global changes that found expression at the domestic level.

5.4. The *caudillo* modality: The nascent independent state and 'anarchic' capitalism

In earlier years, Bolívar's vision had been heavily influenced by his mentor, who argued that since 'Spanish America is *original*, its institutions and government must be *original*' (Rodríguez, 1990, p.88, author's translation). Yet, Bolívar's draft, adopted as Bolivia's first constitution (1826), largely responded to the concerns of the creole and mestizo elites. While these supported progressive ideas like free trade and sought self-determination, they demonstrated the coloniser's contempt towards the indigenous majority (Fowler, 2002, p.13). As visible in the following, ethnic exclusion became the lynchpin of the imagined cohesion of the new republic (López Mercado, 2014, p.77).

The first Bolivian Constitution: A strong centre and exclusive rights for few

The 1826 Constitution resembled the Spanish model that was marked by a strong executive, headed by an indirectly elected, powerful and life-time presidency (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.39; Gisbert, 2003b,

⁵⁵ Importing cheap food facilitated lower wages, the expansion of the industrial working class and urbanisation.

354). Given the internal rivalries, the strong centralism reflects Bolívar's concern about the elite's capacities to govern Bolivia (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.40). Participation was severely restricted, as only citizens could vote (Art. 24) and run for or obtain public office (Art. 17, 42, 46, 50). The vast majority of indigenous people did not meet the requirements for citizenship⁵⁶ (Art. 14) and fell into the category of 'Bolivians' (Art. 11). These were obliged, for example, to live subordinated to the constitution and laws, obey the constituted authorities, contribute to public spending and sacrifice their goods and lives for the Republic's health when needed (Art. 12). As in colonial times, they were recognised as bearers of obligations but excluded from citizenship and so were denied political and other rights. With this, the highly unequal power relations between dominators and dominated stemming from colonial times were enshrined into the Bolivian state. Such a hierarchical unitary state with limited access served as a means to prevent chaos. This was crucial for the desired post-independence economic recovery and modernisation – and hence, the survival of the state form.

Enhancing control and facilitating expansion through the Bolivarian decrees and continued tributes

In line with the contemporary ideas of progress, Bolívar was convinced that the agrarian economy should rapidly transition from a communal to a capitalist system (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.35). The first Bolivarian Decree ruled that the figure of the *caciques* disappears and that usurped or illegally acquired land be redistributed (Gisbert, 2003b, p.353). The second Decree, equalizing indigenous people and all other 'free' Bolivian men, turned indigenous people into salaried proletariat⁵⁷. The third Decree stated that indigenous people owned the land they possessed, and those without land, should receive some through the redistribution following from the first Decree.

This quasi land reform was not solely about progress and modernisation, but was also a measure to limit the communities' autonomy and the influence of indigenous peoples' authorities. Some of these had accumulated land, gained power and adapted to a Spanish life style, sometimes perceiving themselves to be part of the Spanish elites (Larson, 2004). Additionally, even though the decrees seemed to favour the indigenous people, these reforms took place within a constitutionally-recognised liberal state organised into departments, provinces and cantons (Art. 4), ruled by prefects (Art. 129), governors (Art. 130) and *corregidores*⁵⁸ (Art. 131). In this, the *ayllu*, for example, remained unrecognised.

⁵⁶ Apart from literacy, one also need to have a certain profession or be sufficiently wealthy.

⁵⁷ It said that nobody could use the service of indigenous people without a salary, previously agreed in contract form (Antezana, 1992).

⁵⁸ The figures of governors and *corregidores*, introduced under colonial rule, were 'gradually' subordinated to the central government and had the task of maintaining order and public security (Art. 138).

Bolívar and his successor, President De Sucre, formally abolished the tribute system, but the years of independence struggles had been costly⁵⁹ and so it remained de facto in place, camouflaged as a territorial contribution (Albó, 2009a, p.24). The indigenous population's tribute was the main and most stable source of income for the state or better, the *caudillo*, or strongman, in power (see below) (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.36). The indigenous people needed to develop their market relations further to pay for tributes, yet, this did not bring about capitalist relations of production, as it had in Britain and elsewhere and also their relations with the *hacenderos* continued to be personal and subordination was direct. This resembled a Marxist description of feudal social relations.

Indigenous people were not passively accepting the rule of the state and *caudillos* and their subordination to landowners; they not only resisted but also began early to use the legal framework – including Bolivarian Decrees – to defend their rights (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010). Yet, the state – enforcing the rule of law which serves to promote the most profitable accumulation – would prove incapable of recognising, for example, indigenous peoples' ways of living and their cosmologies. These appear incompatible with *universally* applicable laws. Hence, in their relationship with the state, the indigenous people showed ambivalence, sometimes supporting, sometimes seeking to undermine it (Dunkerley, 2007). Since the beginning, wanting to recover or preserve autonomy, while also wanting the state to recognise this, and securing protection from landowners, amongst other things, has been deeply contradictory.

The rise and fall of caudillos in times of 'anarchic capitalism'

Despite the early aim of achieving stability, tensions between exclusive liberal paradigms set up in the constitution and the effective control over territory and population increased rapidly. When De Sucre left for exile in 1828, he reasoned that 'the solution was impossible' (cited by Easterly, 2006, p.99). As in most of Latin America, in the following five decades, *caudillos* or quasi-military leaders, who had gained power as the Spanish empire weakened, served as presidents. They 'invaded' the state (Dunkerley, 1981, p.23), handled government power as a prize to be captured by the strongest and did not respect Republican ideals and principles written in the constitution (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.36). The constitutions adopted in the 1830s under President Santa Cruz centralised the power in the hands of the executive further and gave the Congress a more submissive role (Vargas Rivas, 2013, pp.40-42). This centralising tendency largely continued with the following six constitutions adopted between the 1830s and 1870s (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, pp.24-27).

⁵⁹ Trade had almost come to a standstill, as trade with Spain stopped and among the former colonies dramatically declined. In Bolivia, the mining industry was in severe decline and agricultural production was low, too.

The *caudillo* modality paralleled the breakthrough of industrial capitalism in the West. In this time, global capitalist relations were still largely unchecked by labour (Fulcher, 2015, p.38) and this found expression in the state as a political form of those relations. Often, *caudillos* were owners of large estates and/or owners of mines and with fluctuations in sectors of the economy, *caudillos* rose and fell⁶⁰. Thus, the Republic, in which supreme power is supposedly held by the people and their elected representatives, was in 'severe crisis' (Klein, 2003, p.18). In this, the Bolivian state could hardly appear as a neutral arbiter, since political power and the economic realm were hardly separated. Yet, there were some instances of slight movement towards such division, when, for example, with the formal expansion of the 1839 Constitution measures for direct political participation⁶¹. Yet, in all this, citizenship remained heavily restricted and those excluded from citizenship and obliged to pay tribute, among other things, could hardly perceive it as an uncommitted broker.

A recovering economy and the end of the reciprocity pact

After an almost 50 year-long silver depression, the price started recovering steadily in the 1860s. Consequently, relations between indigenous people and creoles/mestizos underwent profound changes. The indigenous populations' tribute turned less important in the public budget (Albó, 2009a, p.24). At the same time, since, the mining industry and towns were growing again, more food stuff was needed, which led to a more rapacious demand for land (ibid.).

In this context, the *caudillos* took a more aggressive approach towards indigenous people (Klein, 2003, p.147). Justified with liberal ideas such as modernisation and progress, the 1866 '*anti-campesino*' Decree, was the 'first really sustained attack on Indian communal property' (ibid., p.136). With this measure, President Melgarejo (1864-71) indirectly ordered the selling of indigenous populations' lands as individual titles at auction (De Mesa and Mesa Gisbert, 2003, pp.429-430). Shortly afterwards, with the 1868 Constitution⁶² and the '*feudalizante*' legislation, the indigenous people's territory was formally turned into state property (Antezana, 1992). The 1874 '*Ex-vinculación*' Law of Community Lands under President Frías (1872-1873; 1874-1876) went even further (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.506-507): In Article 2, the prefectural authorities were obliged to claim from the indigenous people their right to lay claim on their possessions if they had recovered them. Article 4 declared terrain not possessed by indigenous people redundant and, therefore, state property. Article 5 enabled indigenous people to sell the titled lands they possessed (Antezana, 1992, p.134). These reforms opened the free market of land (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.37) and *hacenderos* and *latifundistas*, including

⁶⁰ For a list, see Mesa Gisbert (2003a, pp.841-842).

⁶¹ It established a directly-elected president (Art. 66). Previously, the election happened through local electoral juntas (Art. 66; 1831 CPE). Also municipal councils with directly elected members were established in departmental capitals and in some provinces (Art. 130).

⁶² Article 10 opened the possibility of expropriation.

the *caudillos*, could legally expand their land at a cheap price or gratis. In this, the idea of communal territory had remained not just unrecognised by the state, but the state sought – following in the interest of capital-in-general – to eliminate it as far as it was in the way of more profitable accumulation.

In the following decades, Bolivia experienced the expansion of (neo-)*haciendas* (Klein, 2003, p.147). The colonial reciprocity pact was completely called off, when in 1879, the existing tribute categories were revised and the indigenous peoples' community were no longer a taxable entity (Platt, 1982, p.101). From then on, taxes were paid according to the production of each plot of land. This was an attempt to integrate them as peasants, who work their privately-owned land, into the capitalist market system. This aggressive stance towards indigenous people increased tensions and rebellions broke out in which they sought to defend their self-determination⁶³ (López Mercado, 2014, p.103).

The inability of caudillo modality to handle global pressures

Over time, the world market had turned towards a more 'managed capitalism', under which 'uncertainties generated by unregulated competition' were reduced (Fulcher, 2015, p.41). Britain increasingly faced an over-accumulation crisis and in response, production was more and more liberalised, opening spaces for absorption (Clarke, 1992). Parallel to this, Bolivia turned into one of the peripheral states in the international division of labour, that had an increasingly modern export sector that could satisfy needs and absorb capital from others (Klein, 2003, p.146).

As 'victim' of 'second colonisation' through the British Empire, the mining industry underwent large-scale reorganisation facilitated by investments from Britain and Chile (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.37). Modern machinery and technologies helped to massively increase output and profits without much labour power (Klein, 2003, p.145). In this context, the lack, and poor quality, of infrastructure became a crucial barrier and required investment (Skidmore and Smith, 2005, p.40).

Yet, early on, the *caudillos* had been 'spiritually and organically incapable of directing the task of economic reconstitution' (Mariátegui, 1971, p.9). The increasing tensions within the reconfiguring creole/mestizo elite made it clear that the 'years of confusion' (De Mesa and Mesa Gisbert, 2003) of the *caudillo* modality lacked the necessary stability and order to survive under 'managed capitalism'.

⁶³ They, for example, were key in the overthrow of Melgarejo's regime (Albó, 2009a, p.25).

5.5. The exclusive liberal modality: Laissez-faire modality and gold, silver and tin booms

The costly War of the Pacific (1879–80)⁶⁴ triggered deep changes. In its aftermath, a group from the mining elite, whose members had benefitted from post-1860s recovery, took state power. They aimed to build a civilian and properly administered regime of 'order and progress', which they saw as key for (stable) growth. Better infrastructure – mostly rail – was particularly crucial for a cheaper, quicker and safer transport of goods, but for its development, a more favourable climate for investment was needed (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.498-500).

Under the banner of 'national unification', the state underwent formal reorganisation, reflected in the 1878 and 1880 Constitutions (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, pp.27-28). On one hand, the territorial state organisation remained hierarchical and tight, allowing the centre a high degree of control⁶⁵. On the other, the executive-legislative relation changed dramatically, as Congress was no longer envisioned as submissive but as a key arena for political debate. With this formal shift in power balance, the state started appearing more like the neutral arbiter, separated from the economic sphere. Still, citizenship remained tied to criteria such as literacy, making it the *exclusive* liberal modality.

From an intra-elite consensus system to the 1898/9 revolt

In the following years, a two-party system, consisting of a Conservative and a Liberal Party, emerged, which was 'necessary [for] the political system [which] the mining elite desired' (Klein, 2003, p.153). Since it was based on an intra-elite consensus and with regards to essential ideas, 'very little if nothing' divided the parties (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, p.492, author's translation), indigenous peoples and the growing urban working class remained unrepresented.

Yet, the changes at the world market, which had to do with the industrialisation in the West, triggered tensions within the elite. While in the 1880s, the price of silver declined and gold mining entered a crisis, demands for tin and to a lesser extent, copper, zinc and lead, were growing (Klein, 2003, p.155). Consequently, mining operations shifted towards these sectors and profits were high, also because the technology developed during the silver boom could be transferred (ibid.). La Paz, at the centre of the increasingly powerful tin elite, had twice as many inhabitants as the capital of the gold- and silver industry Sucre, and exported 3 million pesos, while Sucre only reached 40,000 (Roca, 2005, p.212).

Two proposals for state (re)organisation were developed and increasingly vocalised by the two parties (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.18). The Liberals, backed by the emergent tin oligarchy, argued for

⁶⁴ In this, the forces of Bolivia and Peru suffered a humiliating defeat against Chile's armed forces and Bolivia lost its access to the Pacific (De Mesa and Mesa Gisbert, 2003, pp.447-465).

⁶⁵ Following both Constitutions, the prefect, sub-prefect and *corregidor* remained dependent on the next higher authority (Art. 101, 103, 104) and prefect and sub-prefects could be removed by the president (Art. 105).

a federal state⁶⁶ with La Paz as capital and in which the departments would have greater autonomy from the central government than before. Their support base was the growing urban professional classes and non-silver-mining groups in La Paz, Oruro and Cochabamba (Klein, 2003, p.155). The Conservatives, in power since 1880 and associated with the weakening gold and silver-mining elite from Sucre, sought to defend the constitutionally established unitary state, with Sucre as capital and seat of government⁶⁷ (ibid.).

After increasing mobilisation in 1898 and the revolt of 1899⁶⁸, also called the 'federal war', the triumphant Liberals moved the seat of government to La Paz, from where they sought to establish a new hegemony (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.18). Yet, apart from the relocation of the government, no changes in the state organisation occurred and it is therefore more appropriate to speak of a 'war of capitals' instead of a 'federal war' (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.18). When the federal idea was discussed at the 1899 Convention, it only received support from 18 out of 50 votes and the issue was discarded as symbolic but at the time inapplicable (Roca, 2005, p.258). This shows that once in state power, the Liberals – like the Conservatives earlier – seemed to perceive a centralised/ing state more beneficial for increasing productivity and maximising (their) profits.

Indigenous peoples' rebellions: Entering alliances, anti-climaxes and voicing demands towards the state

The above-mentioned agrarian reforms had facilitated the growth of 'neo-feudal' *haciendas* and since many indigenous people had been forced to sell a great deal of land, they increasingly rented usufruct land from *latifundistas* in return for working for the *hacendero*. As in colonial times, this meant catering to the needs of the landowners' family (Easterly, 2006, p.100). Yet, unlike in colonial times, the indigenous people had become more deeply incorporated into the capitalist land market. Despite points of disagreement⁶⁹, the mining and *hacendero* elites which were highly influential in this liberal

⁶⁶ This was no new proposal, since after Melgarejo's fall in 1871, there had been a project in a constituent assembly for creating the 'United States of Bolivia', pushed by some *tarijeños* and *cochabambinos*, that ultimately failed to generate wider interest. Some years later, the *cruceño* Andrés Ibáñez led a movement, which had an egalitarian orientation and a vision of a federal state. Despite turning 'federal prefect' in 1877, he was finally defeated by people from his own class, who saw in him a 'dangerous dissolute' (Roca, 2005, p.212).

⁶⁷ Sucre had been capital during the era of De Sucre, but until 1880, the seat of government and congress depended on the president in power. With the conservatives ruling since 1880, Sucre had turned into the de facto seat of government.

⁶⁸ When in late 1898, Conservatives proposed to make Sucre government and congress seat, the Liberals wanted congress to move to Cochabamba as a neutral space, which the Conservatives rejected. Despite resistance from the Liberals, a law was promulgated that established Sucre as capital and seat of the executive. For the radical supporter of the federalist proposal, creating a federal regime would require the overthrow of President Fernández Alonso. A federal junta was formed, largely supported by *paceños* and led by General Pando, with Zárate Willka as ally. After large-scale protests in Sucre and La Paz, the president sent troops towards La Paz. In Challapata (Oruro), they heard that their opponents had acquired over two million arms, yet decided to continue to Oruro, having formed two brigades. The first brigade encountered Pando and many indigenous people in Cosmini, and fled to Ayo Ayo, where they were massacred. In the decisive battle in Segundo Crucero de Paria on the 10th of April 1899, Pando's troops won and Fernández Alonso went into exile.

⁶⁹ See Gordillo (1998) for some details on varying proposals on turning indigenous into *peones* (unskilled workers), *colonos* (settlers).

exclusive modality perceived – like the *caudillos* – that communal property, key in the *ayllus*, inhibited market capacity and opposed individual freedom (Albó, 2009a, p.24).

While after the reforms, indigenous resistance was weakened in the short-term, it regained some strength in the exclusive liberal modality and discontent erupted in the form of rebellions (Albó, 2009a, p.24). Other social groups attempted to utilise their determination and people-power for their purposes (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.19). According to the 1901 census, for each creole, there were four indigenous people (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2011, p.81).

The most noteworthy alliance was the one between the Liberal Party and the powerful indigenous leader Zárate Willka, in the 1899 federal revolt (see footnote 68, Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.509-514). General Pando from the Liberals had promised him that in the event of a victory, he would give back the land the indigenous people had lost under Melgarejo's reforms (Tórrez and Arce C., 2014, p.37). Only after the entrance of Zárate Willka, the *revolt* of the rising elite turned into an uprising that was unprecedented in scale. In Oruro, La Paz, Cochabamba and Potosí, where land grabbing and repression had hit the hardest, supportive indigenous groups' rebellions were particularly strong.

This alliance was inherently contradictory from the beginning, as powerful actors in the Liberal Party had acquired lands from the indigenous people through earlier reforms. After the Liberal victory, the indigenous people and mestizos realised that their allies would not keep their promises and closed ranks. Further revolts were brutally repressed (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.513-514) and rumours of a 'war of races' spread (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006). Zárate Willka himself was arrested and later executed (Albó, 2007, pp.76-77).

Consequently, the territorial situation of indigenous groups remained largely unchanged. Many highland and valleys people were '*yanaconas*' (helpers) in the large estates, which involved three to five weekly working days on the land and in the house of the *haciendas*. In their 'free' time, they worked as usufructuries on small plots of land, which they had possessed in earlier times. Against this backdrop, the indigenous people intensified their efforts to build networks amongst themselves to organise against exploiters and those who had taken their lands (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006). Despite severe repression, the network survived the following decades. Over time, on top of key and closely linked demands for territory and self-determination, other requests were made of the state. For example, they asked for state-provided education, which appears to conflict with umbrella demands for self-determination, as it implies deeper inclusion into the state and rule of law it enforces. This demand shows that the state was also somewhat perceived as an arbiter and not solely rejected as something to struggle against, rather its laws could be used strategically.

At the same time, the above-mentioned 'neo-feudal' *hacienda* expansions and also increasingly affected the lowlands, where the situation of indigenous peoples worsened. In the Chaco, the military supported the expansion of cattle ranches. Many people were as '*peones*' quasi enslaved, living in worse conditions than the highland people (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.18). The autonomy of several groups in the northern lowlands came to an end with the rubber boom in the Amazon Basin (1879-1912), which largely served to satisfy the demands of an industrialising Europe (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.521-523). As in the highland and valleys, the people did not passively accept these changes. Among the lowland groups, the rebellion of Guaraní people was particularly strong (Combès, 2005), yet was at times brutally defeated, for example, in Kuruyuki (1892) (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.19).

The politics under the tin barons

The 1899 revolt had been triggered by shifts in the mining economy that were driven by demands from outside Bolivia (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, p.541). By 1900, tin accounted for over half of export earnings and the peak of the boom, more than 30 per cent of world supply came from Bolivia (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.38). Tin mining absorbed more capital than silver mining, but also produced more wealth. The three 'tin barons' Patiño, Aramayo and Hochschild, who controlled most of the Bolivian tin mining sector, quickly joined the list of the wealthiest men in the world.

Under the 'barons', governance was different compared to the now weakened silver and gold mining, which had been directly involved⁷⁰ in the Conservative rule. These had been rather nationally-oriented, emphasising, order, progress and 'national unification' after the chaotic *caudillo* rule. In turn, the tin barons were more cosmopolitan-minded and professionally managed their international companies, while influencing national politics more indirectly through pressure groups.

The 20-year-long rule of the Liberals, and especially the years under President Montes (1904-09, 1913-17) are often described as the calmest time in Bolivian political history. With the 1903 Treaty of Petrópolis⁷¹ and the 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with Chile⁷², two main border conflicts were solved and great financial indemnities were paid to Bolivia. These resources facilitated the continuation of the Conservatives' project of infrastructure development and by 1920, the larger cities

⁷⁰ Bolivian presidents under the Conservative's rule in the 19th century were either silver magnates themselves (Pacheco, 1884–88; Arce, 1888–92) or were closely associated with such magnates (Baptista, 1892–96; Fernández Alonso, 1896–99).

⁷¹ This resolved the 'Acre problem' (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.523-525), which revolved around the rubber-boom territory of Acre close to Brazil. The Bolivian government tried to crush a rebellion seeking autonomy, which Brazil had covertly supported. With the treaty, the ruling Liberals agreed to sell the territory to Brazil.

⁷² With the treaty, Bolivia accepted the loss of the Litoral province, which implied losing access to the sea and large nitrate reserves (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.529-530).

were connected by rail and considerable progress was made in linking Bolivia to neighbouring countries⁷³.

Political turbulences and economic crisis in the context of World War I and Great Depression

In 1920, the rule of the Liberals ended with a coup and the Republican Party took over. This had been founded with a similar ideology and support base as the Conservatives which had stumbled into severe crises after their 1899 defeat (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.537; 545). Yet, after taking state power, the Republicans split into two camps and this rivalry characterised Bolivia's political scenery for the next years⁷⁴. Increasing political turbulence was once again predated by economic instability, the main reason for which was to be found outside Bolivia.

After World War I, the tin industry recovered quickly and in 1929, the production figures reached an all-time peak. However, international prices for raw materials steadily fell and between 1928 and 1932, the unit value of Latin American exports declined by over 50 per cent (Fowler, 2002, p.110). With the Great Depression (1928-1941), major capital investments in tin mining ended, while production prices increased (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, p.548). Since Bolivia had no internal savings, the economic situation became more severe, which further fuelled political conflict (ibid.).

To confront the growing crisis, President Salamanca (1931-1934) sought to manipulate the inflation rate (ibid., pp.569-570). This led to serious tensions between his party and the Liberals, which controlled Congress and ultimately vetoed Salamanca's proposed measure. Since it was thought that 'increasing economic crisis would lead to social anarchy' (Klein, 2003, p.174), Salamanca brought the long-standing border conflict with Paraguay over the sparsely populated Chaco territory onto the political agenda. It was hoped that patriotism would unify people⁷⁵.

The Chaco disaster and the fall of the exclusive liberal modality

A border skirmish provoked by Salamanca's people in June 1932 led to an open war with Paraguay which ended disastrously for Bolivia. Despite having entered with better equipped and probably better trained soldiers, between 60,000 and 70,000 Bolivians died and Bolivia lost more territory than Paraguay had initially claimed (Fowler, 2002, p.126). Most Bolivian soldiers were people who had not been recognised as 'citizens', but risked their lives defending Bolivia. For Zavaleta, the war achieved the nationalisation of the Bolivian consciousness (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, p.585).

⁷³ For example, the railway La Paz-Arica was inaugurated in 1913 (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, p.53).

⁷⁴ The heads of the two fractions were Saavedra, a lawyer from La Paz, who had led the 1920 coup and served as president from 1921-1925 and Salamanca, a Cochabamba landowner and founder of the *Genuine Republican Party*. In 1930, a junta supporting Salamanca's fraction that was also backed by several Liberals, overthrew Saavedra's successor Siles Reyes.

⁷⁵ The Chaco War is sometimes also seen as resulting from Bolivian and/or Paraguayan expansionism. Again others make US Standard Oil and British Dutch Royal Shell responsible, who in the prospect of profiting from extraction, pressured the governments to expand frontiers. For a comprehensive description of events, see Mesa Gisbert (2003b, pp.567-582).

In the aftermath of the Chaco War, nation and state became disarticulated, leading to a 'disintegration of the established order' (Klein, 2003, p.178). Out of a strong sense of frustration, the Chaco generation was born. These younger literate veterans were often not recognised as 'citizens', who held the traditional parties and hydrocarbon firms responsible for the war and began setting up more radical parties and, for example, workers' movements as alternatives to the established parties (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.590-592). The exclusive liberal modality was increasingly incapable of resolving economic upheavals and facilitating growth. It was also unable to contain the struggles from the Chaco generation and other excluded sectors of society.

5.6. The military socialist modality: Between old order and revolution

The 1936 coup, which ended over 50 years of civilian rule, signalled the end of the exclusive liberal modality and gave way to the military socialist modality. In the following months, key demands from the Chaco generation were translated into 'state matter'. Most fundamentally, the Standard Oil Company holdings were confiscated and the state-owned hydrocarbon company YPF was founded (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, p.589).

The 1938 Constitution

In 1938, President Busch (1937-1939), a former military officer and hero of the Chaco War, promulgated a Constitution, which had compared to earlier ones a radically social(ist) orientation (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, pp.30-31). Most fundamentally, the right to private property was no longer absolute, but conditional to the interest of society, making expropriation possible (Art. 17). National interest in the subsoil was declared and the state was granted the right to intervene in economic life, to regulate commerce and address social issues. This was in strong contrast to the laissez-faire capitalism of previous decades (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.595-596). It was also the first constitution that recognised the existence of indigenous peoples' communities and declared the state's responsibility to promote the education of 'peasants' (Art.165-167).

With the removal of property restrictions on citizenship (Art. 43, 44), another key demand from the Chaco generation was translated into the state. Yet, the literacy requirement remained in place, so that many indigenous people and more generally, most of those living in rural areas remained excluded. Nevertheless, this measure led to a dramatic increase of eligible voters. Consequently, the potential key electoral support base for political parties also changed.

Partial translation and repression triggering further demands and rising resistance

Despite the recognition of indigenous peoples' communities, territorial state organisation remained unchanged and an agrarian reform did not take place. Hence, demands for territory of indigenous and *mestizo* groups were not met and also the peasant education was not translated into concrete

legislation and policies. Some years later, at the 1st *Congreso Indegenal* in 1945, President Villaroel (1943-1946), speaking in Quechua, promulgated decrees abolishing the *pongueaje* service and establishing schools in all *haciendas* (Albó, 2009a, pp.27-28) – which also did not result in concrete action. In this context resistance did not stop as became clear, for example, in the 1947 indigenous peoples' rebellion (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, p.613).

At the same time, a crucial demand of the Chaco generation – more specifically the rising urban working class, was met with the introduction of the 1939 labour law, giving workers the right to bargain collectively. Yet, overall the demands were only partially met and this propelled the rise of more movements and parties. Among the forces gaining importance was the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) which already controlled an important part of Congress in the early 1940s and increasingly managed to mobilise popular masses.

The massacre in Catavi, Potosí in 1942, in which unarmed protesting miners, who worked for tin baron Patiño, were killed and their facilities destroyed, fuelled resistance against the military government of Peñaranda (1940-1943) (Keen and Haynes, 2009, p.407). At the forefront of the oppositional forces was the mostly urban middle-class and the MNR was the key political force.

Tin barons, the World War II export boom and the end of military socialist modality

The ideological underpinning of the 1938 Constitution and the rising conflicts and mobilisation in which profound change was demanded, threatened the foreign investments climate and hence, Bolivia's competitiveness in the global market. Those who had benefitted in previous decades, above all, the tin oligarchy and *hacienda* owners, were unwilling to tolerate the changes underway. They became more directly active in national politics than before forming an alliance with the Party of the Revolutionary Left.

As in the context of World War II, the demand for tin skyrocketed and the tin barons became very powerful; they were responsible for almost 80 per cent of Bolivian tin extraction in the 1940s (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.37). In the military socialist modality, taxes did not significantly rise – despite the socialist orientation, for example, Patiño's operational capital quadrupled between 1940 and 1948, while collected taxes increased by only seven per cent (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.37). Yet, raising more state revenue would have been crucial for responding to demands from the Chaco generation, who wanted redistribution, (better) education and social policies provided by the state.

In 1946, another more conservative regime took over, which was backed by the tin barons and reversed some earlier changes (Albó, 2009a, p.28). This signalled the end of the military socialist modality, which had incorporated some important demands from the Bolivian population, but in a way that not only lacked depth but also seemed to be in the way of the most profitable accumulation.

The tin oligarchy, with favourable world market conditions of the World War II⁷⁶ on their side, had stood against this. However, in this case, the pressures inside Bolivia for inclusion and redistribution had intensified and found expression in increasingly organised movements including a growing urban class, intellectuals, miners, and some indigenous people. Since the export boom had been closely associated with World War II, with its end, the demand for minerals dropped dramatically. When the mining economy reached a crisis point, the power of the mining oligarchs weakened. This facilitated another period of rapid change.

5.7. The inclusive nationalist modality: An unfinished revolution and economic upheavals⁷⁷

When the MNR won the 1951 presidential elections, the outgoing President Urriolagoitia, who had been supported by the oligarchy, refused to accept the results, leading the military to intervene and take over (Albó, 2009a, p.28; Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.617-619). In the months of military leadership, protests and uprisings turned increasingly violent. Initially, these took place mainly in urban and mining centres, but as indigenous people/peasants became increasingly conscious, they started to occupy lands and claimed that formal expropriation should follow (Dunkerley, 1984, pp.36-37). The long-standing demand for agrarian reform had remained unheard of in earlier political modalities. In April 1952, the military regime was overthrown and the MNR took over.

The state of 1952

The consolidation of the strong, unitary 'state of 52' was at the heart of the revolutionary agenda and designed to create a sense of inclusiveness and pride among Bolivians (Albó, 2009a, p.28). Three key demands of the movements, which supported the MNR, were rapidly integrated into the state, which reshaped the state's appearance and its apparent relationship with the market.

First, following ideas of state capitalism, the three largest mines were nationalised⁷⁸ and in the subsequent years, numerous public enterprises were created (Albó, 2009a, p.29; Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.659-660). Since mining was of vital importance and had, for example, in 1952 accounted for 80 per cent of the state budget, the state mining company (COMIBOL) was crucial (Lessmann, 2010, p.89). Secondly, for creating the inclusive state, universal suffrage was introduced. This meant that women and indigenous people and others, who had previously been excluded, turned into key electoral support bases and were no longer groups acting outside formal politics (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.661). The third measure tackled a long-standing demand of indigenous people – territory, which entered

⁷⁶ After the government proclaimed its support of the Allies in 1943, the export conditions with the US were more favourable (Fowler, 2002, p.112).

⁷⁷ Since Chapter 6 deals in more details around struggles for autonomy since the second half of the 20th century, the following three political modalities are not discussed in as much depth as the previous ones.

⁷⁸ The owners received compensations and given the unfavourable world market, they did not protest.

the MNR agenda after massive protests (Lessmann, 2010, p.88). The Agrarian Reform (Law Decree 3464/1953) sought to break the backbone of the (*neo-*)*hacienda* system by giving the land to those who worked it. With the reform, *pongueaje* was legally abolished and land should be divided into small parcels or *minifundios*, and redistributed (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.657-659)⁷⁹.

The new Ministry of Peasant Affairs was a key 'hinge' between government and communities and facilitated the creation of peasant syndicates. Not just the communities that were part of a *hacienda*, but also others were required to adopt in this syndicalist structure. Participation had benefits like discounts on some important consumer goods, but more importantly access to *minifundios* (Yashar, 2005, p.160). Each community-level syndicate was part of provincial and departmental *centrales* and the National Confederation of Peasant Workers of Bolivia (CNTCB) (Albó, 1992). When a community member was given a small parcel of land, she became part of the community syndicate. The syndicates became a key component of the 'state of 52', replacing the *hacienda* as a means of social control (Yashar, 2005, p.159). With their help, the MNR sought to expand and strengthen its ties throughout the rural areas (Albó, 1987, p.383). Yet, this new structure did not mean that the *ayllus* disappeared, and is sometimes just seen as a new label for the community as it had always existed (Albó, 1992).

The two-edged 'campesinación'

The syndicates recognised their members as peasants or *campesinos* and not as indigenous people, which meant that in becoming part of the 'state of 52', people had to assimilate the dominant culture (Yashar, 2005, p.156). Through this '*campesinación*' (Albó, 2009a, p.31), they were included in the Bolivian *nation* which was viewed as stable, homogenous and unitary (Sanjinés, 2004). In order to achieve this, the MNR sought to support the development of national consciousness through official discourse, schooling⁸⁰ and the syndicate structure. In this, *mestizaje* was promoted as a way of combating racism (Albó, 2009b, p.67), which moderated the co-existence of numerous ethnic groups.

The *campesinación*, the *minifundios* and syndicate, together with the lack of recognition of the *ayllu*, was in tension with the long-standing demand for self-determination and territory (Ticona Alejo *et al.*, 1995, p.102). It can even be said that one of the key objectives of these reforms was to stop or slow down the rise of ethno-nationalism (Máiz, 2010) and the construction of a radical proposal of indigenous people against creole domination (Rivera Cusicanqui, 1986 [2003]). Such internal conflicts would have also stood in the way of profitable accumulation. In turn, the subordination to the rules of private property facilitated the increasing expansion of capital into the everyday lives and minds of

⁷⁹ The maximum number of hectares varied based on the geographical zone and property purpose: For example, in the Titicaca region, a small property was 10 hectares, while in the Chaco, it was 80 hectares (Art. 15). A large cattle farm in the tropics or sub-tropics can have 50.0000 hectares (Art. 21).

⁸⁰ On the Education Reform, see Mesa Gisbert (2003c, pp.661-662).

the community members, which threatened the *ayllus*. In post tin-boom era, this opened up possibilities for growth.

While in the lowlands, where the state was far less present, the reform had less effect and this time, a new *latifundaria* structure emerged (see 6.2.1.), in the highlands, *minifundio* titling was rather widespread. In this, another reciprocity pact emerged: In exchange for MNR support, the indigenous people as peasants were allowed to retain some degree of self-management as long as it did not threaten the overall project. With the 1952 Revolution, the hunger for territory was quietened in the highlands in the short-term. Yet, the reform could not prevent resistance towards assimilation. For example, in 1956, Laureano Machaca proclaimed the (short-lived) independent Aymara Republic (Keen and Haynes, 2009, p.408) and in the 1960s, the ethno-nationalist *Katarista* movement emerged (see 6.2.2.).

The unfinished revolution, increasing economic upheaval and internal tensions

In the medium-term, the 1952 Revolution dismantled the oligarchic-feudal power relations, but it remained 'unfinished' (Finot, 2016). The reform did not increase productivity and neither could consumption capacity nor savings be built up (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.677). With this, the aspired-to modern industrial structure did not emerge and so, Bolivia's position in the world market hardly changed (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.38).

Under President Paz Estenssoro (1952-56) who enacted the major reforms, groups within the MNR debated alternative modes of political organization, including the implementation of a workers' assembly. But internal tensions grew⁸¹ and apart from a powerful labour movement, organized as the Bolivian Labour Federation (COB), no institution was created that channelled the demands of those who had supported the revolution (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.656-657).

In 1956, the more conservative President Siles Zuazo took office and the revolution's 'retreat' began (Dunkerley, 1984, p.83). His main concern was rising inflation and the increasingly tight state budget, both of which threatened the revolution (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.668-669). Between 1952 and 1956, inflation had been 100 per cent (Lessmann, 2010, p.90), largely driven by the costly, rundown tin industry and the Agrarian Reform which initially had a disruptive effect on food production (Keen and Haynes, 2009, p.408). The mines, managed by COMIBOL produced losses and the massively growing public sector and allegedly increasing corruption, also led to a further rise in public spending (Céspedes Cossio, 2005).

⁸¹ These were related to conflicts over the MNR strategy and access to state employment (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.668-670).

In this context, the US – which had become a key player since the end of World War I, and replaced the British as a major influence in Latin America – offered financial support through Kennedy's 1961 'Alliance for Progress', which had the aim of curtailing revolutionary movements following the Cuban example (Lessmann, 2010, p.90). With US support – which curtailed Bolivia's self-determination even further – an economic programme was enacted to combat inflation. Subsequently, the miners' recently granted welfare benefits⁸² were cut and the participation of workers in management of state enterprises were significantly limited (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.674-675). In addition, North American oil companies were invited to enter Bolivia on favourable conditions.

The 1961 Constitution, promulgated by President Paz Estenssoro, who had returned to power in 1960, codified the major targets of the state of 1952 (Vargas Rivas, 2013, p.48). Yet, his government continued the more liberal line of Siles Zuazo and in addition, it agreed to restore a powerful US-trained army to offset the power of workers and peasant/indigenous militia. These groups were part of the protest movements that defended the revolution's ideals against the MNR's policies and politics, including the growing US influence. Ensuring order by destabilising them was seen as a requirement for tackling the unstable economic situation (Keen and Haynes, 2009, p.205).

Instead of responding to their support bases, the MNR leaders replied to the global pressures for sustaining growth and moved closer to the rising national non-industrial bourgeois groups, which were crucial for economic development (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.38). A new elite had formed around the state mining company COMIBOL and another bourgeois group emerged from the growing agricultural sector and hydrocarbon industry in the lowlands (see 6.2.1.).

Against this backdrop, the 'state of 1952' was increasingly called into question by those who had helped to incite the revolution and were dissatisfied with the translation of their demands. The nationalist and revolutionary left was increasingly divided while the economic situation turned more severe. It became apparent that this modality did not resolve the deep-seated economic problems and was unable to bring about rising productivity which triggered further social and political pressures which it could not contain (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, p.63).

5.8. The military modality: Recovering growth at the cost of repression

In the aftermath of the 1964 election, a military junta led by General Barrientos took power. President Barrientos (1964-1966; 1966-1969) continued the lines of rather conservative economic reform and political retrenchment, aiming at demobilising the popular groups - except for the peasants, who had supported him. For example, he prohibited the miners from striking and froze their wages (Lessmann,

⁸² This refers in particular to the 1956 Social Security Code (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.667).

2010, p.92) and when 'Che' Guevara started his guerrilla fight in Bolivia, the president took drastic measures in the area, such as the Massacre of San Juan (Dunkerley, 1984, pp.134-140).

After Barrientos' death in 1969, which 'left the country in a vacuum' (ibid., p.156), some years of political upheaval⁸³ followed during which US Gulf Oil Company holdings were nationalised. Then, General Banzer, an associate of the increasingly powerful *cruceño* elite (see 6.2.1.), assumed power. President Banzer (1971-1978)⁸⁴ arguably headed the most repressive military regime. His government suspended all civil rights, suppressed the workers' movement, banned the peasant syndicates and sent the military to occupy the mines. Key actors of the 1952 Revolution were repressed and forced into exile.

The pact between government and peasants drastically changed with this political modality: the military agreed to respect the 1952 reforms in exchange for unconditional support of the government (Dunkerley, 1984, p.132). As a consequence, the peasants were turned into a rampart against any other, especially radical left-wing political influences, perceived dangerous for stability and growth (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.681-682). Yet, in the medium-term, this did not prevent oppositional forces gaining strength.

Also due to rising world market prices for raw materials, the early years under the military had been marked by high economic growth (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.702-704). In the 1960s and 1970s, Bolivia became one of the key hydrocarbon exporters in the region (Gandarillas Gonzales, 2014, p.118; Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.705-708). For infrastructure projects, serving above all to facilitate hydrocarbon exports, international loans were taken out. From 1971 to 1978, public debt increased from 460 million to three billion USD (Lessmann, 2010, p.96).

Banzer's regime not only gave national representation to those who benefitted from the hydrocarbon boom, but also to growing commercial agricultural interests in the Santa Cruz region (see 6.2.1.). When in 1977, the economic boom came to a close, the economic situation became more severe (Dunkerley and Morales, 1986, pp.96-97) and oppositional groups gained strength. At the same time, under US-President Carter (1977-81), the international pressure on the Banzer regime rose, as it was perceived a dictatorship (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.710). In 1978, Banzer resigned under threat of a coup.

Towards a new political modality: Political creativity and economic upheavals

In the next four years, Bolivia experienced nine presidents, with seven of them heading a de facto government and the average duration of 5 ½ months per presidency, indicates extremely high political

⁸³ For a comprehensive description of events, which were, among others, marked by conflicts between different groups in the military, see Dunkerley (1984, pp.158-200).

⁸⁴ See Dunkerley (1984, pp.201-248) for a detailed analysis.

instability (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.714). While Mesa Gisbert (2003c) finds this time characterised by aimlessness, Klein calls this period 'one of the most politically creative [times]' (Klein, 2003, p.234). Mobilisations, involving public employees, workers, especially miners, and to a lesser extent, students and middle classes increased (Villegas N, 2014, p.19).

At this time, radical parties such as those associated with the *Kataristas*, who sought to change the overall logic of the state and recuperate self-determination (see 6.2.2.), did not (yet) play significant roles on the national scale. Yet, change was underway when the 1978 and 1979 elections showed that, for the first time, peasants did not vote as one bloc (Klein, 2003, p.234), which forecasted the end of the pact between government and peasants (Dunkerley and Morales, 1986, p.94). In the following, a relatively even balance between conservative and leftist forces found in different parties emerged and this more complex party system dominated Bolivia until the 2000s (Klein, 2003, p.235).

These political upheavals occurred in an economically turbulent environment in the context of the declining world market. It was marked by severely declining production and in this context, the coca(ine) business⁸⁵, which has a quick economic return, rapidly expanded and some traffickers were powerful (Dunkerley, 1984, pp.322-325). At the same time, large public debt was accumulated by public enterprises, also due to severe misspending (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.753-737).

In 1982, Siles Zuazo (1982-1985) assumed presidency once more. Against a background of severe tensions within government, an economically disastrous situation and intensifying social unrest⁸⁶, he called early elections (Dunkerley and Morales, 1986, p.94; Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.737-739; 743-744). When he stepped down, hyperinflation was at an unprecedented height which, to this day, remains unparalleled⁸⁷, the economy had almost collapsed, state mines and other public enterprises were suffering enormous losses (Garcés, 2013, p.26). In addition, an unusually strong El Niño had disastrous consequences for agricultural outputs.

5.9. The early neoliberal (multicultural)⁸⁸ modality: Stabilisation and pacted democracy

After the 1985 election, Paz Estenssoro from the MNR assumed his fourth Presidency, despite having won less votes than former President Banzer, who ran on the ticket of Nationalist Democratic Action

⁸⁵ Under Banzer, the coca(ine) production had increased, in particular in the Chapare region, and with this, traffickers emerged as players on the (informal) political stage (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.728-730; Dunkerley, 1984, pp.310-314).

⁸⁶ Popular mobilisation more than tripled compared to the 1971-76 period and more than doubled compared to 1977-1982 (Villegas N, 2014, p.18).

⁸⁷ In 1985, it was 8,767 per cent (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.740).

⁸⁸ Only in the early 1990s, multiculturalism was introduced (see 6.2.2.). In this section, the emphasis is on the neoliberal nature of this political modality.

(AND), which he had founded in 1979 (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.717). The post-electoral negotiations were decisive in the arising multi-party system⁸⁹.

Starting his presidency in this dramatic way, Paz Estenssoro's first speech was entitled– 'Bolivia is dying away from us' (ibid., p.745, author's translation). Under US pressure this made clear that national self-determination was de facto, almost inexistent, his government rapidly implemented drastic reforms to battle hyperinflation, considered by then Planning Minister Sánchez de Lozada 'not as the most important but as the only task' (Lessmann, 2010, p.99; author's translation). With Supreme Decree No 21060/1985⁹⁰, arguably 'the most radical shift in planning and policy in the country for over thirty years' (Dunkerley and Morales, 1986, p.86), the Bolivian currency was massively devalued, gasoline prices were increased, wages frozen and price supports banned. Furthermore, in the 'shock therapy' most tin mines were closed, the state mining company COMIBOL was dismantled⁹¹ and the Bolivian economy was re-opened to foreign investors. After the 1952 revolution, this was another turning point in Bolivian history, this time with the market as the new patron (Interview 8).

While the economic situation stabilized, the socio-economic outcomes of the shock reform were dramatic (Dunkerley, 2007, p.106). Around 20,000 miners became unemployed, which weakened the previously powerful workers' movement. While the government enacted a (small) programme to give work to the former miners, they also temporarily sent dozens of labour leaders to detention centres in the Bolivian tropic to avoid a general strike or similar. This 'relocation' was no more than demobilisation of the mining sector (Interview 8) and the popular movements became indeed increasingly disarticulated⁹² (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.39).

Consequently, private mining co-operatives started to develop and some former miners migrated to the valleys and became (coca) farmers, among them, the current President Morales (Padilla, 2014, p.131). From there, new resistance emerged, initially mostly directed against US-supported 'War on Drugs'⁹³ and broadening over the following years, emphasising the importance of recovering self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblos*, whose destiny would be largely in the hands of the US and the linked domestic elite that did not represent the *pueblos'* interests (see also 6.3.1.).

It seemed that the national political parties, once again made a pact to distribute power among themselves and gained an almost monopoly status in political decision-making and management

⁸⁹ If no candidate receives more than half of the votes in the first round, the congress elects the president by majority among the two candidates who received most votes.

⁹⁰ For a summary, see Mesa Gisbert (2003c, pp.745-747).

⁹¹ Paz Estenssoro himself had helped set up COMIBOL after the 1952 Revolution.

⁹² The number of social conflicts declined severely from around 500 per year between 1983 and 1988 to an annual average of 200 in the 1989-1994 period (Villegas N, 2014, p.18).

⁹³ See, for example, Léons and Sanabria (1997) for an in-depth analysis on Coca-Cocaine in Bolivia until the mid-1990s.

(Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.747). Despite having Marxist antecedents and having played a key role in the 'state of 52', Paz Zamora's government (1989-1993) was characterized by pragmatism and moderation, continuing the neoliberal reform agenda, and having close ties with the US (ibid., pp.754-756). Yet, under his government, it became evident that the achieved stabilisation of the economy neither triggered growth nor did it lead to the demanded redistribution.

5.10. Summing-up

In this chapter, I revised the transformation of the Bolivian state with the help of the form-analysis suggested in the previous chapter. Following this, the emergence of the state was driven by struggles and since then it has evolved mediating internal struggles and external pressures. The state form has never been stable and reorganisation occurred in reaction to a changing world market conditions or other external pressures, domestic demands and/or internal tensions, which the previous modality could not contain. Each political modality offered a temporary solution, which has triggered new challenges, while state managers tend to attempt to facilitate in different ways most profitable accumulation. Overall, this has over time meant a deepening of enforcement of rules of money and law for indigenous people – yet, such inclusion has increasingly curtailed peoples' self-determination.

In colonial and *caudillo* modalities, the rather feudal social relations and indigenous self-determination were largely accepted as long as it did not stand in the way of profitable accumulation. Yet, at moments of tight resources, the space for self-determination was severely reduced, but not annihilated. While not recognised as citizens, the indigenous were officially Bolivians and hence bearer of obligation, subordinated to the rule of law. While these laws appeared universal, in their enforcement, the state form did not appear as neutral arbiter, since political and economic domination largely overlapped during this time.

Change occurred with the exclusive liberal modality, which was needed for more profitable accumulation in a more globally managed capitalism. In this, the state appeared more like a political state separated from the economic sphere. While exclusion from citizenship remained intact, quests for inclusion and struggles for recuperating their lands – needed for self-determination – strengthened and also resistance continued, at times in alliance with others. With this, the demands turned increasingly contradictory.

With the rise of the Chaco generation, finding expression in a wide array of partly radical movements, reorganisation became necessary, as the exclusive liberal modality was incapable of incorporating these pressures. In the following military socialist modality, some changes associated with the 1952 revolution were foreshadowed. Yet, it was marked by severe internal tensions and faced with resistance from the tin oligarchs, who were particularly powerful during World War II.

In the aftermath of World War II, which weakened the tin barons, the pressures for inclusion in the Chaco generation grew further and this facilitated the rise of the nationalist inclusive modality that accommodated these struggles. While being recognised as citizens, able to participate in election, indigenous people were incorporated into the state as peasants and with this subsumed to the dominant, imagined nation of Bolivians. Hence, the diversity of cosmologies and ways of life were not reflected in the state. With land reform, submission to the rules of money and law of private property deepened while self-determination was curtailed.

Yet, the state of 1952 was economically unsustainable and the plan for building an industrial economy failed. To sustain growth, the state managers changed their approach and entered a debtor relationship with the US, which can be seen as limiting the *pueblos'* self-determination. In this context, tensions in government and people's resistance grew stronger and the military modality emerged, which was temporarily capable of mediating the different pressures, mostly by using force against internal opponents. In favourable world market conditions, economic growth could be recovered in the short-term. Yet, in the medium-term, the boom came to a close and the opposition – also from indigenous peoples – grew stronger and internationally, dictatorships became undesirable, leading to pressures for a democratic option.

After years of dramatic economic and political upheaval and intense social mobilisation, state managers enacted – under the pressure of the US – the first wave of neoliberal reforms, which helped to recover macro-economic stability. Yet, redistribution did not take place, leading to social disturbances, while movements became increasingly disarticulated also because representation in and to the state was severely limited despite formal democratisation. The arising tensions would later facilitate the emergence of the pluri-national state, at which I look in more depth in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Struggles for autonomy and the emergence of the Pluri-national State

6.1. Introduction

Having analysed the development of the Bolivian state form through different political modalities, this chapter looks in more depth at how the pluri-national state came into being. As explained in 4.4.2., struggles for self-determination/autonomy will serve as an entry point, since it is a site of conjuncture of different struggles and it is precisely autonomy that lies at the heart of the pluri-national state idea. As it has already become apparent in the previous chapter, historically, (more) self-determination has not solely been a quest for indigenous peoples, but also for other sectors of Bolivian society, particularly new elites far from the centre or as quests for self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*. In this chapter, it will become even clearer 'in Bolivia, there is much confusion about the term autonomy'⁹⁴ (Interview 62).

In the following, I explore how struggles for autonomy evolved since the mid-20th century and how they were mediated by, and integrated into, previous political modalities and appeared in the 2009 Constitution. In this, I largely follow a chronological order. Yet, to organise such a multi-faceted matter, I begin with subsections on roots and the evolution of departmental and regional demands, followed by indigenous groups' struggles. In the final part, on the 2005-2009 period, I analyse these different strands in a more integrated way and also bring in demands for self-determination of the *pueblo*.

6.2. Roots and evolution of the struggles for self-determination/autonomy since the 1950s

6.2.1. Struggles for departmental and regional decentralisation and autonomy

Non-indigenous people's struggles for state-recognised autonomy have been mostly associated with the Santa Cruz and Tarija departments. In both places, despite different historical antecedents, the demand for what is now known as autonomy largely served to counter the perceived (increasing) centralisation of power in La Paz (Interviews 21,36,69).

Santa Cruz, agribusiness and hydrocarbon business

As shown in the previous chapter, key events and developments related to the Bolivian state form were centred in the highlands and valleys until the early 20th century, which triggered some resistance from elsewhere (see 5.5.). In a 1904 memorandum, members of the *cruceño* elite demanded the

⁹⁴ Yacuiba, 03.03.2016.

integration of the lowlands into the Bolivian state⁹⁵ (Interviews 20,24,30,35), which did not result in action. The Petroleum Law (1921) established the state's participation in hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation with a minimum of eleven per cent of the gross product (Art. 5), but it remained unregulated, how these revenues would be distributed. In 1938, *cruceño* President Busch (see 5.6.) enacted a law, which assigned eleven⁹⁶ percent of the value of petrol extracted from their territory to the departments which could be used to invest in the regional development (Interview 15). This meant an integration into the state without being dependent on the decisions made at the centre (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-d). Yet, in the following years, an actual transfer of revenues did not occur.

The 1942 Plan Bohan, sometimes called the Bolivian Marshall Plan, elaborated by a US mission to Bolivia, prescribed the diversification of the Bolivian economy (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.664-665). In this, the Eastern lowlands were to be the economic engine of Bolivia (Interviews 15,30). Seeking to counteract the vulnerable economy dependent on minerals, mainly tin, suggested measures including the stimulation of agriculture and livestock farming as well as the hydrocarbon industry and infrastructure development (Mesa Gisbert, 2003b, pp.603-604). The 'March to the East' was supposed to properly take off, when in the 1950s, the road from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz was finished and Santa Cruz was connected with the highlands via rail (Lessmann, 2010, p.89).

Yet, this 'March' was partly interrupted by the 1952 Nationalist Revolution (see 5.6. and 5.7.), during which the demands from Santa Cruz for the transfer of the above-mentioned eleven percent intensified. In this, the Committee for Santa Cruz, founded in 1951, played a key role in bringing people together and organising the struggle (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-d). For *cruceños*, they were not just fighting for themselves, but for all departments (Interviews 18,24,27,29,30,33,35) – yet, at this point, Santa Cruz would have benefitted more than others. In 1958, the eleven percent was enacted through a decree (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-d, Interview 30). Some years later, under President Banzer (1971-1978) (see 5.8.), who strongly identified with the lowlands, regional development corporations (CORDES) were established in all departments and their major source of income was the hydrocarbon royalties, especially benefitting Santa Cruz (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, pp.144-146). The CORDES became crucial in executing local and regional public investments in basic services, rural and urban development, and the construction of roads, yet, far less in education and health. While these lacked competences, power and often resources, it was de facto a mechanism of administrative de-concentration (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.17).

⁹⁵ This was in reaction to the 1904 Treaty with Chile, which ended the Pacific War and obliged Chile to compensate Bolivia financially and build a railway from Oruro to Antofagasta, facilitating exports.

⁹⁶ 100 per cent shared by the nine departments means eleven per cent for each.

As briefly mentioned in 5.8., under Banzer, Bolivia turned into a key hydrocarbon exporter in the region: In 1970, Bolivia produced 30,550 million cubic feet of natural gas per day, five years later, it was 140,160 million cubic feet; in the same period the barrels of petroleum produced per year rose from 3.5 to 8.8 million (Mesa Gisbert, 2003a, p.860). In addition, the agrarian reform, key pillar of the 1952 revolution, had been implemented unevenly and, in the lowlands, huge areas were titled for individuals or families, which facilitated high growth rates in the agricultural sector (Romero Bonifaz, 2005, p.113). At the same time, the city of Santa Cruz expanded rapidly⁹⁷. In this scenario, an increasingly powerful non-industrial bourgeois group formed in the lowlands. Contemporary *cruceño* authorities emphasised their own and their ancestors' entrepreneurial spirit, highlighting that *cruceños* have always been creators of their own destinies— rather than asking for help from the state, they look for alternatives themselves (Interviews 20,24,30,33,35). According to a *cruceño* authority, '[w]e are not statistas as they are in La Paz and Cochabamba or others places'⁹⁸ (Interview 15).

With democratisation, debates over possible models of state organisations intensified, while it became evident that at this time, the 1967 Constitution enacted by Barrientos⁹⁹ was only partly translated into formal state organisation. Justified with a concern for stability and order the electoral laws from 1983, 1985 and 1991 did not – unlike the constitution – establish the direct election of mayors (Choque Aldana, 2014, p.192). This caused frustration among those who had hoped for a deepening of democracy beyond the central level. At the same time, it soon became apparent that the neoliberal 'shock therapy' had brought macro-economic stability, but neither economic development nor redistribution (Interviews 27,32). The lowland elite emphasised that they had contributed a large share of the state budget in recent years¹⁰⁰, while not having received many resources from the central state (Interviews 18,24,29,30,33).

In this context, some academics and/or politicians, such as the *cruceño* Molina, demanded a municipalisation (Molina Saucedo, 2015), while others like the *cruceño* Urenda, argued for a strengthening at the departmental level (Urenda Díaz, 2007). A shared concern in these proposals was that the state should become more flexible and move closer to the population. By this, the state could respond better to local/regional needs and facilitate development. For this, both competences and resources would be necessary.

⁹⁷ In 1950, Santa Cruz had 42,746 inhabitants, 254,682 people lived in the city in 1976 and in 1992, and it had 697,278 inhabitants (Mesa Gisbert, 2003a, p.848).

⁹⁸ Santa Cruz, 29.01.2016.

⁹⁹ The 1967 Constitution, which Barrientos promulgated without Congress' approval, did not alter the changes from 1961 but remained de facto out of force until the return to democracy.

¹⁰⁰ In 1988-1990, 28 per cent of the total value production in Bolivia took place in Santa Cruz (Machicado, 2012, p.34).

Under President Paz Zamora (1989-1993), a law on a decentralisation at the departmental level had already passed Congress, but the incoming President Sánchez de Lozada, never enacted it (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.17; Interview 70). Instead, he signed the Law of Popular Participation 1551/1994¹⁰¹, which meant the municipalisation of Bolivia that included the transfer of 20 per cent of state budget to the municipalities, called co-participation (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.770).

A year later, the Law of Administrative Decentralisation 1654/1995 was enacted, which brought a de facto de-concentration, or a 'technical-administrative decentralisation' (Interview 12) to the departmental level. Officially seeking to facilitate an integral decentralisation to municipal and departmental levels, prefectures¹⁰² and departmental councils¹⁰³ were established with the task of managing and executing the budget from the *regalías* (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.770-771). Yet, this law can also be interpreted as considering the departmental level as an extended arm of the central government, coordinating the interaction between the central state level and the municipalities (Interview 27). Competences and transfers were severely limited and prefects were appointed by the president. A common interpretation is that Sánchez de Lozada had feared a loss of power to increasingly powerful regional elites.

For those who had advocated strengthened departments, this was a major disappointment (Interviews 29,30,31,35,40,51,52,54,75,103) – 'This law was bad, it was concentrating [power] and not decentralising'¹⁰⁴ (Interview 15). Urenda himself calls it 'eyewash' (Urenda Díaz, 2007, p.163, author's translation). Nevertheless, even though the conditions for formulating public policies and effective management were not given at the departmental level (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, p.158), this reform was a key step in the construction of the future departmental governments (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.17).

A side effect of Law 1654 was that the term 'decentralisation' was thereafter associated with this experience due to its name. Against this background, in the aftermath of the reform, autonomy turned more and more into a buzzword (Interview 40). Yet, it was not a new demand, the *cruceño* Urenda - inspired by the Spanish model that he had studied closely¹⁰⁵ - had started proposing a state model with autonomies for Bolivia in the 1980s (Interviews 26,30). He envisioned the autonomies as a transitory stage towards a federalisation, which he perceived as the most appropriate state organisation for a diverse place like Bolivia (Interviews 27,30). While autonomy and decentralisation

¹⁰¹ See Faguet (2012) for an in-depth study.

¹⁰² The CORDES were subsumed into these, since these were heavily contested and often associated with mismanagement.

¹⁰³ These included representatives from all provinces and the departmental capital and was presided by the prefect.

¹⁰⁴ Santa Cruz, 29.01.2016.

¹⁰⁵ Already his thesis of *licenciatura* was on the Spanish autonomies (Interview 26).

are conceptually different¹⁰⁶, for those involved in the struggles, autonomy would be largely the same as a 'real', 'fully-fledged' (that is, political, administrative and fiscal) or an 'improved' decentralisation (Interviews 15,24,30,35) and Spain is an often-mentioned model (Interviews 26,33,37,40). As the aim was demanding the election of authorities as well as more competences and resources from the central state, it was often considered less important how this demand would be labelled (Interview 24).

The notion of autonomy gained particular prominence with the publication of the 2001 memorandum of the '*Nación Camba*'¹⁰⁷ Autonomist Movement (López Mercado, 2014, p.122). It was argued that it was necessary to create the Autonomous Region in Santa Cruz, in which all resources are owned by the Camba Nation (Nación Camba, 2001a, b). The Bolivian state must recognise the self-determination of the *pueblos* (ibid.). The Camba Nation movement would later turn into the more radical Camba Nation Liberation Movement, promoting the creation of a new state (Nación Camba, n.d.; Ballvé, n.d.). This happened parallel to radicalising demands in Quispe's Aymara nation, for example (López Mercado, 2014, p.122).

Initially, the Committee for Santa Cruz, which played a crucial role in the growing demand for a deeper decentralisation did not respond to the 2001 memorandum. Those associated closely with the Committee made the Camba Nation, which they perceived as a little radical group, responsible for being accused of separatism (Interview 15). For them, as history has shown, they had always wanted to be integrated as Bolivians and not form a different state (Interview 30).

Tarija and the hydrocarbon reserves

Tarija, the smallest Bolivian department, is considered the other pioneer in the struggle for departmental autonomy. At Bolivia's foundation, Tarija had been part of Argentina and joined Bolivia in 1826, after the majority of *tarijeños* had supported this (La Razón, 2013). In the more recent struggle for autonomy, it has been argued that due to this historical background, the *tarijeños* could also decide not to be part of Bolivia and – more important – under which conditions they are part of it (Interview 43).

Even though more Bolivian presidents were born in Tarija than in any other department, there is a sense among *tarijeños* that governments ignored their department. Instead, they focused on La Paz,

¹⁰⁶ In general terms, while an autonomous entity in state organisation remains solely subordinated to the judicial power of the national level and is apart from this, as the name says, autonomous from the central government, decentralisation involved the transfer of certain functions or attributes (political, administrative, fiscal or economic nature) to the subnational level.

¹⁰⁷ Bolivians distinguish between *camba*, originally meaning 'the one who works his land' and referring to person from the lowlands, and *colla* (from Collasuya), a descriptor for highland people. Yet, they are not neutral terms but 'two racialized, regionally indexical, and contrasting stereotypic characterological figures of Bolivian national personhood' (Swinehart, 2012, p.81).

Cochabamba and Santa Cruz and by indulging these three departments, currently inhabited by around two thirds of the population, elections were easily won (Interviews 37,54,56). This lack of attention towards Tarija is seen as particularly unjust given Tarija's key role in the hydrocarbon industry (Interview 56): In 1924 and 1926, the first two fields of petroleum production were discovered in Tarija, following which, the General Management of the Standard Oil Company of Bolivia was established to manage operations and logistics in the sector (Torres Orías, 2012).

As in Santa Cruz, local actors several times sought – often unsuccessfully – attention from the centre, which helped create the 'autonomist spirit' (Interviews 37,38,40,54,56). For example, following the enactment of the above-mentioned Petroleum Law, *tarijeño* Congress members demanded that the rent from resource extraction should go to the producing department (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.15).

In the context of the second wave of neoliberal reforms in the 1990s, the department and the conflicts associated with it, gained national importance (Interviews 43,54). Following the Capitalisation Law 1544/1994, through which the state-owned hydrocarbon company YPFB was 'capitalized/privatised'¹⁰⁸, large hydrocarbon reserves were discovered. While in 1996, 4.24 trillion cubic feet of proven and probable gas and petroleum reserves, this number rose to 52.30 trillion cubic feet in 2002 (Mesa Gisbert, 2003a, p.861). In 2002, 87.3 per cent of these reserves were located in Tarija, followed by Santa Cruz with 9.3 per cent (ibid.) and the three mega fields in Tarija alone account for a third of the total of Bolivian exports (Gandarillas Gonzales, 2014, p.119). Against this backdrop, the control over the eleven percent became a crucial question, which also intensified the long-standing internal friction inside the Tarija department between the highland/valley and lowland population¹⁰⁹ (Interviews 54,55,70).

With the growing importance of hydrocarbons, Tarija's Gran Chaco Province gained political weight, where [at least] two out of the three mega fields are located¹¹⁰. In the Chaco *tarijeño*, people – and especially authorities – speak of long-term neglect from La Paz and Tarija capital, it is 'a forgotten Chaco' (Interview 71)¹¹¹. In the 1983 Quebracho Pact among the Civic Committees from the hydrocarbon-rich Chacos of Tarija, Chuquisaca and Santa Cruz local actors expressed their desire to form a 10th department (Interview 55). This was not supported from the departmental capitals and

¹⁰⁸ Capitalization meant that private companies could buy half of the shares of the state-owned enterprise. The remaining 50 per cent went to a new institution that administered the received funds in the name of Bolivian citizens. For this, YPFB was split into two units, which engaged in exploration and production activities and another one for the pipeline transportation. Two YPFB owned refineries and pipelines were completely privatised.

¹⁰⁹ People in Tarija distinguish the *chapaco* from the valleys and highlands of the department, and the *chaqueño*, from the lowlands (Lizárrago Aranibar and Vacaflares Rivero, 2007, pp.29-31). Shaped by their different historical experiences, they are said to have different life styles and so on (Interview 43).

¹¹⁰ There is a dispute over whether one is partly located in the O'Connor Province.

¹¹¹ For example, until today, no asphalted road connects the Chaco and Tarija capital while there is one connecting the Chaco and the more distant Santa Cruz capital.

the divisions between departmental elites and regional Chaco elites widened in the following years. Authorities in the capital of the department considered it a struggle for separation (Interview 52), led by the local elite (Interview 69). Authorities in the Chaco, however, see it as a demand from the *pueblo* (Interview 49), which has to do with the centralism at the departmental level (Interviews 61,71). At the same time, people had more in common with the other Chacos than with the rest of Tarija (Interviews 55,71, see footnote 109).

In the early 21st century, 45 per cent¹¹² of the departmental hydrocarbon *regalías* generated in the province, were assigned to the Gran Chaco (Lea Plaza Peláez, 2013, p.165), which signalled a response to a longstanding demand, first voiced in the 1983 mobilisations (El País Online, 2013). With the departmental resolutions¹¹³, these resources were required to be transferred to the sub-prefecture in the provincial capital, Yacuiba, and *corregimientos mayores* in the other municipalities, Villamontes and Caraparí. In this context, the Gran Chaco authorities, after fierce negotiations, agreed that each municipality received 15 per cent despite large population differences (Interviews 54,56). This whole development was highly contested in the Tarija capital. In 8.4., I will return to these points.

Intensification of struggles and rise of a joint opposition in the early 2000s

With the outbreak of social protests in 2000-2003 and particularly after the 2002 national election, the demands for departmental and regional autonomy became louder (Interview 86). In these elections, the MAS-IPSP won a majority in four highland departments and its presidential candidate Morales came second with a margin of less than two percent (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.789-790). As I will explain more in 6.3.1., the MAS-IPSP had campaigned for the recuperation of sovereignty for the *pueblo*, for which major economic and political transformations would be needed. The election had made clear that the pact of the established parties in which local elites were somewhat represented, and the neoliberal agenda, from which they had benefitted, were at risk. In this, the election of prefects was seen as more pressing than ever (Interview 9): If power were to be lost at the national level, the prefectures could still be controlled (Interviews 37,99). In addition, particularly after the 2003 Gas War (see Dangl, 2007), the economic effects of the 'crisis' became apparent, which increased the concerns of those who wanted to benefit from the liberalised economy.

Demands for the recuperation of hydrocarbons gained force in the highlands, but was not in the interest of powerful economic players, whose interests could be defended in the name of a more business-oriented and/or liberal-minded *cruceño* and *tarijeño*. The rising tensions also fed into the

¹¹² The Chaco Province makes up 45 per cent of the territory of Tarija (Interview 44).

¹¹³ The resolution 034/2001 of the Departmental Council recognises the right to the 45 per cent. Resolution 132/2002 obliges the prefecture to transfer 15 per cent to the three municipalities each.

radicalisation of some groups alongside an increase in violence¹¹⁴. After Sánchez de Lozada resigned due to the 2003 Gas War, interim President Mesa Gisbert was faced with an increasingly difficult situation (see Webber, 2010b). In Santa Cruz and Tarija, the demands for autonomy gained in popularity. A significant moment was the first *cabildo*, convened by the Committee for Santa Cruz in June 2004. Its President Costas¹¹⁵ presented eleven tasks of the Santa Cruz department for Bolivia, among them, an autonomy referendum (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-a).

Since formal democratisation, the economic elites' influence on the government had been upheld with positions in, or close ties to, the central government¹¹⁶. Yet, this was at risk given the shifting political tide and so, business became more actively engaged. For a *cruceño* social scientist, 'the Committee for Santa Cruz became an instrument used by the *cruceño* elite to construct their autonomy discourse'¹¹⁷ (Interview 18). Among the Committee's supporters were business organisations like the Agricultural Chamber of the East (CAO), a powerful player in the 1990s and early 2000s which was crucial in preventing the central government enacting the 1996 INRA land reform (see 6.2.2.) (Colque, 2014, pp.180-181). An important ally of the above-mentioned more radical semi-separatist Camba Nation, was the powerful Santa Cruz Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services and Tourism (CAINCO), which sought increasing economic liberalisation. CAINCO represents around 1,500 companies active in the Santa Cruz department, among them, international hydrocarbon companies, which also provided it with generous funding (Ballvé, n.d.).

Shortly after the 2004 sub-national elections, in which the MAS-IPSP became the most powerful political force at the local level (Georgetown University, 2017), the '*Cabildo* of Autonomy and Work' was organised by the Civic Committee, Departmental Workers Central, the local university and the neighbourhood councils (Antelo Vaca, 2015. pp.32-33). This collaboration was perceived crucial for legitimising the demand for autonomy against the MAS-IPSP's accusation that it was a local separatist elite, by showing that it was a popular movement with a national vision respecting different identities (Céspedes Cossio, 2005, p.164-165). According to *cruceño* figures, over 350,000 people attended (Interview 35; GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-b; Céspedes Cossio, 2005, p.164). With this *cabildo*, a 'Provisional Autonomous Assembly' and a 'Pre-autonomy Council' were established to advance constitutional

¹¹⁴ In the time of the Gas War, for example, members of the Camba Nation Youth Brigade and others brutally repelled a march of indigenous protesters from entering the Santa Cruz (Ballvé, n.d.).

¹¹⁵ Before assuming presidency of the Civic Committee, Costas led the Confederation of Bolivian Breeders, the Association of Milk Producers and the CAO.

¹¹⁶ At least in the past 20 years, the presidents of the committee originated from business associations, private business and political parties and many of them later served as prefects or in congress (Interviews 15,35).

¹¹⁷ Santa Cruz, 01.02.2016.

reform (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-b). The council was also expected to develop an autonomy statute, which could serve as a model for other departments (ibid.).

On the day of the *cabildo*, Mesa Gisbert signed Supreme Decree 27988/2005, which established the popular vote of the prefects or, to be precise, the election for the selection of prefects. While this was officially presented as a matter of deepening democracy (Interviews 24,45), it did not pacify the situation. Instead, it gave further impetus to those who wanted departmental autonomy, since it was clear that resources and legislative powers were needed to become properly autonomous (Interview 70). At the same time, the demand for the hydrocarbon law, which was aimed at restoring Bolivian resources so that all could benefit, alongside an apparent government paralysis, led to intensifying protests in the highlands.

In addition, the demands from the Gran Chaco also became louder. A proposal for a law from the Gran Chaco province, was sent to Congress and was enacted as Law 3038/2005 without major changes (El País Online, 2013). While the earlier departmental resolutions had assigned the Gran Chaco 45 per cent of what was produced in the province, this law assigned 45 per cent of Tarija's hydrocarbon *regalías* to the province (Art. 5). A key local actor explained that this was just since the Gran Chaco province was Bolivia's principal hydrocarbon producing region (La Razón, 2009). Yet, this measure was not welcomed by those wanting departmental autonomy in Tarija.

Shortly afterwards, the Hydrocarbon Law 3058/2005 was passed¹¹⁸. While this clearly responded to the strong demands from the highlands, it was also an attempt to placate the lowland movements (Interview 12). This law made the state the legal owner of hydrocarbons (Art. 5) and gave the government control over resource commercialisation. With the creation of the Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons (IDH), taxes were increased from 18 to 32 percent. The existing contracts with foreign companies were to be renegotiated (Art. 5), which resulted in none of the companies leaving the country (Interview 3) (for a critical analysis, see Kaup (2010)).

As the law did not go far enough for those who demanded full nationalisation, protests continued and those demanding departmental autonomy rejected nationalisation altogether. They were also concerned about the economic consequences of the measure - for example, the net foreign direct investment had already dropped in previous years and turned negative in 2005 (Fundación Milenio, 2013, p.2).

¹¹⁸ After it had passed Congress, President Mesa Gisbert refused to sign it, but did not veto against it. The president of the Senate signed the law.

Seeking to ease the crisis, Mesa Gisbert shortly afterwards announced two more measures, responding to demands from mobilised masses and powerful opponents and seeking to offer a way towards a resolution of the crisis during which the state did less and less to facilitate the most profitable accumulation. With Supreme Decree 28195/2005, he called for an election of a constituent assembly as well as a binding autonomy referendum, scheduled for October 2005. Four days later, faced with continued protests, Mesa Gisbert offered his resignation. Over the next few months, interim President Rodríguez, former head of the Bolivian judiciary¹¹⁹ prepared the next elections.

6.2.2. Indigenous struggles for self-determination/autonomy and the pluri-national idea

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the experiences of the diverse people in the highlands, valleys and lowlands were in many regards very distinct. These differences have also shaped their struggle for self-determination/autonomy and relation with the state in more recent years.

Struggles for indigenous self-determination in the lowlands

The quest for peoples' self-determination in recent decades is perceived as originating from the minority *pueblos* in the lowlands (Interviews 5, 13, 36, 80, 84, 86, 91). As shown in 6.2.1., the post-1940s were marked by the unprecedented growth of agricultural and hydrocarbon sectors. Previously untouched terrain was opened up for agricultural use, hydrocarbon extraction and the required infrastructure, which threatened the livelihoods of those inhabiting the Amazon and Chaco regions.

While especially larger lowland groups had previously made contact, the 1982 foundation of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of the Bolivian East (CIDOB) institutionalised those linkages in a parent body¹²⁰ (Flores Gonzales, 2014, p.171). This process was not purely organic and external actors¹²¹ facilitated the growing network, at least financially¹²². Since the beginning, territorial rights, which were necessary for self-determination, were a key point on CIDOB's agenda. As this overlapped with the Western environmental movement's concern with the rainforest, some Western organisations offered support for projects that contributed to, yet, sometimes also fragmented, the struggles (Interview 4).

¹¹⁹ The presidents of both congress chambers were heavily disliked by the highland protesters and the head of the Bolivian judiciary was next in the line of succession.

¹²⁰ It was co-founded by representatives of Guaraní-Isoseño, Chiquitano, Ayoreo and Guarayo peoples.

¹²¹ In the 1960s and 1970s, some researchers, especially anthropologists, from the West started working with lowland peoples, sometimes leading to the foundation of NGOs or other initiatives.

¹²² The interviewees closer associated with the indigenous movement claim that the process was driven by the indigenous, who strategically used external actors for financial resources, while those unsuccessfully tried to impose their agenda (Interviews 112,115). When talking to (former) external actors, they highlight their importance in the process, going far beyond financial support, while a case to case variation is admitted (Interview 4). Another observer recalled that external influences made CIDOB adopt what she called civilising agenda that forced communities to move from traditional to liberal democratic elections and decision-making if they wanted to have a say in the organisation (Interview 39).

As for other sectors of society, also for the lowland peoples, Bolivia's return to democracy meant hope for change. CIDOB with 100,000 signatures proposed – unsuccessfully – an indigenous law that recognised territory, collective rights and self-government (Del Pilar Valencia and Egido, 2010, p.22). With the 1990 'March for Territory and Dignity' from Mojeño (Trinidad) to La Paz, CIDOB demonstrated that it had become capable of confronting Bolivian state and society with indigenous demands (Vargas Delgado and Álvarez Paniagua, 2014, p.25). The marchers demanded state protection against landowners and hydrocarbon explorers, and their recognition as 'indigenous subject' with rights and obligations (Interview 8).

In response to the march, President Paz Zamora (1989-1993) granted the first 'Original Peoples' Lands' (TCO) through Supreme Decrees¹²³. While at first sight this appeared like a great achievement, the TCO concept also caused disappointment among protesters, since it referred to land and not to territory (Interview 7). While both concepts refer to a physical space, land is associated with the bio-productive system that can be seen as a mercantile object and territory means the concrete occupation of the space conveyed through social and cultural structures (Valenzuela, 2009, pp.9-10). In other words, land is a far narrower and less political concept than territory (Interviews 7,82). In the translation of demand for territory into the TCO concept, something remained untranslated.

The government also proposed an indigenous law, which was rejected by the organisations as insufficient (Lessmann, 2010, p.120). Hope sparked again when Paz Zamora signed the ILO Convention No 169 in 1991¹²⁴ as the first Latin American head of state. Shortly afterwards, CIDOB presented – again unsuccessfully – another proposal for an indigenous law (Interview 15). Its dissemination 'served to systematise the strategic demands from the indigenous people'¹²⁵ (Interview 21) and the proposal, speaking of indigenous territorial management, concretised the idea of indigenous autonomy in the TCO (Salgado, 2010, p.212).

Struggles for reconstitution of ancestral territories in the highlands and the pluri-national idea

The mothers and fathers of the pluri-national state appeared on the stage with the *indigenista-katarista* movement – often just called *Kataristas*¹²⁶, an ethno-centric movement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. It was led by Aymara intellectuals from La Paz and Oruro, who sought to resist the assimilation associated with the 'state of 1952' (see 5.7.). They found that the peasant category

¹²³ In 1990, two were granted and three more in 1992. In the same period, in the aftermath of the establishment of the National System of Protected Areas in 1993, a process of managing protected areas began and some more protected areas were recognised (for a list, see Mesa Gisbert (2003a, pp.870-873)).

¹²⁴ This convention recognised the collective rights of indigenous peoples. Shortly after the signing, it was translated with Law 1257/1991 into Bolivian legislation.

¹²⁵ Santa Cruz, 03.02.2016.

¹²⁶ For a more detailed analysis of the movement, see, for example, Albó (1992) and Sanjinés (2002).

implied relationships within, and among, communities and between people and territory and nature, which did not correspond to their original way of life in the *ayllu* (see 5.2.) (Interview 8). Given the large percentage of Aymara and Quechua people in the population, most of the *indigenista-kataristas* were less concerned with seeking state-protection through recognition. Instead, they envisioned a hegemonic project that would change the state altogether. Reinaga argues in his '*Tesis India*' for a transition towards a style of governance inspired by traditional indigenous systems (Reinaga, 1971 [2006]). Such ideas fed into the 1973 Tiwanaku Manifest, which envisioned alongside cultural, political and economic decolonisation, a pluri-national state in and through which autonomy could be recovered (Choque Canqui, 2010, p.43).

Those associated with the movements mostly looked at their situation with 'two eyes' (Albó, 1992), that is, ethnicity and class, and over time, severe differences emerged about how to make sense of the status quo and how to best approach future struggles. The movement split roughly into two camps, which represented different understandings of their relationship with the state. First, the Indian Túpac Katari Movement (MITKA), focusing on ethnicity and hence also called *indigenistas*, wanted to achieve a higher level of independence from the state, as they thought of the state not only as inefficient, but also as oppositional to their interests (Albó, 1987). Therefore, they preferred to recover and develop their own institutions. Secondly, the Revolutionary Túpac Katari Movement (MRTK) or *Kataristas*, put more emphasis on class and wanted to deepen their influence within the state, with the ultimate goal of controlling it (*ibid.*). This perception made them more open to forming alliances with other groups, in particular the peasants.

The largest peasant union CSUTCB, founded in the late 1970s used *katarismo* as its ideological principle, which led some of the ideas to appear in national political debates (Schavelzon, 2015, pp.75-76). Thus, 'subversive *indios*' became 'allowed *indios*' (Dunkerley, 2013, p.60). Yet, in this process of engaging in the state, those ideas, sometimes carried by opportunism by some *Kataristas*, were modulated so much that they had often little to do with the initial agenda. At the same time, the divide between different *Katarista* strands deepened and the CSUTCB increasingly distanced itself from *katarismo*, which facilitated the rise of the *cocalero* strand with which Morales is associated (see 6.3.1.) (Fontana, 2014, p.440).

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to recall all alliances, events and similar, I focus on one important, concrete initiative, which promoted autonomy and territory and gives insights into how such demands were translated by and into the state. In the 1980s, some urban Aymara intellectuals including Silvia Rivera, associated with the NGO '*Taller de Historia Oral Andina*' (THOA) started a project on reconstituting *ayllus* within the Bolivian state (Albó, 2009a, pp.54-56). The THOA gave

workshops in Aymara-speaking highland communities to restore practices and customs, which were perceived in danger after decades of assimilation. Through historical investigation, territorial narratives were recovered, supporting the demand for *ayllu* reconstitution (Stephenson, 2002).

The vice-president in Sánchez de Lozada's first government (1993-1997), Cárdenas¹²⁷, supported the *ayllu* reconstitution. He originated from the MRTK and was the first self-identified indigenous to hold such a high political post (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.762-763). Cárdenas coordinated the formation of *ayllu* federations at the departmental level, which facilitated the foundation of National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (CONAMAQ) in 1997 (Albó, 2009a, p.56). Yet, state organisation or internal borders were not altered and so – as in the case of the TCO – something of the original idea remained untranslated.

The 1994 multicultural Constitution and subsequent reforms

The 1994 Constitution¹²⁸, adopted with Law 1585/1994, defined Bolivia as multi-ethnic and pluricultural (Art. 1), and was together with some measures from Sánchez de Lozada's 'Plan for All'¹²⁹ initially seen as a major step in the struggles of indigenous peoples. For the lowland peoples, the inclusion of the TCO (Art. 171) was key. However, the category remained separate from territorial state organisation (Art. 108). Additionally, the *ayllu* was ignored and the indigenous peoples remained unrecognised as a collective subject (Lizárrago Aranibar and Vacaflares Rivero, 2007, p.76).

The above-mentioned Law of Popular Participation 1551/1994 is often perceived as a government strategy to diffuse the struggle of indigenous people (Garcés, 2013, pp.28-29). Their communities and organisations were legally recognised at the local level. Yet, since this was tied to imposed borders, which did not usually correspond with the peoples' territories or *ayllus*, their efforts were redirected towards the municipal level. The Municipal Law 2028/1999 later opened the possibility for 'indigenous districts' within the municipal border and also 'associations of indigenous districts' were recognised with Supreme Decree 26142/2001. The National Dialogue Law 2235/2001 provided the basis for an indigenous municipality (Art. 5). Yet, this concept has not been popular¹³⁰ and, when remembered, it is perceived as irrelevant (Interviews 10,23).

The 1994 Constitution also responded to another key concern of lowland peoples because it rejected large estates (Art. 167). For this, a land reform was needed, which was in conflict with another point

¹²⁷ Following a widely-shared anecdote, his father changed his little son's family name from Choquehuanca, a typical Aymara family name, to Cárdenas, a family name of Spanish origin, to improve his opportunities in life.

¹²⁸ For an overview, see Céspedes Cossio (2005, pp.34-35).

¹²⁹ Next to the above-mentioned capitalisation and popular participation, the Education Reform Law 1565/1994, was key. It allowed for the first time primary education in indigenous languages (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.771-772).

¹³⁰ Jesús de Machaca, Urubichá and the former indigenous district San Antonio de Lomerío are the only cases, all established in 2001-02 (Galindo Soza, 2008).

on the government's agenda. In the late 1980s, the government requested support from the international community to strengthen the stagnating agricultural sector. While this was a measure to revive growth, it overlapped with the interest of sectors of the increasingly influential non-industrial lowland elite. Shortly after the president granted the first TCOs and signed ILO Convention No 169, the government accepted the 35 million USD World Bank project entitled 'Eastern Lowlands Natural Resource Management and Agricultural Production Project'. This concluded successfully, according to the completion report, in 1997 (World Bank, 1990, 1998).

In the meantime, in order to push for agrarian reform, all CIDOB member groups, supported by some highland organisations, marched in 1996 for 'Territory, development and political participation of indigenous *pueblos*'. They achieved more TCO titles and shortly afterwards, the long-awaited land reform law INRA 1715/1996 was enacted, which concretised aspects of the 1994 Constitution. It formalised the TCO concept, ordered a review of all properties and titles for those who proved that they had obtained their land legally and used it socially or economically (Colque, 2014, p.180). Within ten years, all grand, illegal landholdings were to be recovered by the state and redistributed. Yet, the law bureaucratised and slowed titling down (Albó, 2009a, p.53) and in 2007, less than ten per cent of the land had been reviewed and the titled land mostly consisted of TCOs (Barragán *et al.*, 2007).

The reform had been opposed by powerful lowland actors, who benefitted from international prices of soybeans and rising investments (Colque, 2014, p.181). Partly as an outcome of the World Bank project and indicating the success of the agricultural elite in preventing land reform, the acreage used for the cultivation of soybeans, sugarcane and others, massively expanded: in the Santa Cruz department, it more than quadrupled between 1990 and 2007 (Urioste, cited by Colque, 2014). Simultaneously the hydrocarbon industry underwent change. The different governments pushed for the development of the sector which can be seen in the above-mentioned Capitalisation Law 1544/1994 and in efforts put into the Bolivia-Brazil pipeline, finalised in 1999 (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, pp.765-769). This promoted the interest of the hydrocarbon elite that had formed and gained increasingly in power. Taken together, the poor enforcement of land reform and strengthening of the hydrocarbon sector, can be seen as facilitating economic growth, required for the state's material survival.

In this time, the state that had incorporated the different demands appeared Janus-faced. Yet, looking more closely, the apparent mismatch was mediated by subordinating indigenous matters or making them compatible with concerns of growth and productivity, and the overall functioning and set-up of the state was hardly altered. This was opposed to ideas of changing the logic of the state altogether. Against this background and in the context of the expansion of agricultural and hydrocarbon sectors

that posed a threat to lowland peoples' livelihoods, indigenous mobilisation continued under Banzer (1997-2001). Before the 2002 elections, the CIDOB coordinated a march for 'Popular Sovereignty, Territory, and Natural Resources'. This march helped to spread the idea that a constituent assembly was needed (AA.VV., 2011, p.35).

The main highland organisation representing indigenous people, CONAMAQ, became a platform on which radical ideas, partly inspired by *Katarismo*, were expressed. In the 2002 proposal, the organisation demanded the redefinition of internal state limits according to the territoriality of the *ayllus*, and the larger entities, *markas* and *suyus* (CONAMAQ, 2002). Integration into the existing state would hardly go far enough. The term 'autonomy' is used here as free determination in local administration and management of territory, including control over natural resources and communal justice. However, internally the CONAMAQ was divided into different camps with alternating visions of a new state and what and how changes would be possible (Interview 8).

As it became increasingly clear that the neoliberal multicultural modality was not going to survive much longer, since it was incapable of containing the different demands and respond to pressures, Bolivian intellectuals developed ideas and proposals on indigenous autonomies too. García Linera not only argued against the neoliberal state and the exclusive Republic (García Linera, 2004 [2009], p.271), but also rejected 'perhaps more surprisingly, a State model based on indigenous-original national autonomy projects such as those being carried out by certain Aymara groups during the years that he was writing' (Baker, 2015a, p.289) and which were found in CONAMAQ proposals. He pointed to the complexity of achieving an organic integration of the state into a diverse society, highlighting for example, the monolingual and –cultural administrative body of the Republic and the state's privileged dominance of the capitalist form over other forms of production (García Linera, 2004 [2009]). This made radical proposals such as those by the CONAMAQ unfeasible. García Linera also responded to other demands and referred to the formation of departmental autonomies in Spanish-speaking areas (ibid., p.332). Other proposals from non-indigenous sectors of society included the territorial reorganisation of Bolivia into different regions that would overlap with ancestral borders and would respond to demands for *ayllu* reconstitution, yet, making it less radical and easier for other groups to accept (Interview 9).

6.3. Towards the pluri-national state with autonomies (2005-2009)

6.3.1. The MAS-IPSP assumes power with a different take on self-determination

In December 2005, Morales from the MAS-IPSP¹³¹ was elected as president. He had emerged from the coca-grower union movement of the 1980s in the Chapare region, when unemployed miners, many

¹³¹ See Harten (2011) for a comprehensive description of the MAS-IPSP's rise and development.

of them engaged in the CSUTCB, migrated, and became coca-farmers (see 5.9.). In the beginning, their resistance was largely focused on the US-supported 'War on Drugs', which directly affected their coca production. Quickly, the agenda broadened, directed against US imperialism and aimed at the recuperation of sovereignty and the self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblos*, for which drastic change was considered indispensable.

Since the beginning, the movement was marked by a hierarchical syndicate peasant tradition and not by an indigenous mindset (Interviews 5, 21). In the mid-1990s, some of them established the 'Assembly for the Sovereignty of the *Pueblos*' and after an internal split, Morales' supporters founded the Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the *Pueblos* (IPSP). With the denomination 'Political Instrument', they sought to demonstrate their rejection of existing Bolivian parties and wanted to present themselves as an alternative. When registration for election proved difficult, IPSP borrowed their registration and party name from a Falangist splinter faction, so that they could compete in the 1999 local election (Harten, 2011). Shortly afterwards, the label MAS-IPSP¹³² was adopted. Against this backdrop, the supposedly socialist leanings of the movement had been called into question – opponents claim that they are 'pretentious socialists, because their social base [consists of] capitalists, they are tradespeople'¹³³ (Interview 20), yet, like 'real socialists', they aspire to achieve a centralisation of power (Interview 52).

Even though self-determination was on the agenda of the MAS-IPSP, this did not mean that they reflected the same as the others who demanded self-determination/autonomy. The MAS-IPSP was mostly concerned with the self-determination of Bolivia within the international order and control of the *pueblo* over the state. In this, the adopted vision of a stronger, redistributive state – that is also visible in the first Government Plan (MAS-IPSP, 2005) and MAS-IPSP' first National Development Plan (PND, 2007) – stands in contrast with desires for peoples' autonomy and the nationalist-unifying underpinning clashes with pluri-nationalism (Interviews 12,22). Also, decentralisation was not on the agenda and appeared largely incompatible with it (Interviews 3,54,69,80,91,103).

When taking power, the MAS-IPSP also won the large majority of deputies (72/130)(Georgetown University, 2017). Yet, Morales was confronted by directly elected prefects from the opposition. The *media luna*, a name deriving from the crescent shape of the four lowland departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni and Pando, emerged as the alliance between those four opposition prefectures that joined forces under the umbrella of autonomy. Actors in the small and comparatively underdeveloped Beni and Pando have long demanded attention from the central state (Interviews 12,29). Being politically

¹³² This decision provoked internal conflicts and Felipe Quispe, for example, distanced himself. In 2000, he created his own party, the Indigenous Pachacuti Movement (MIP) (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.786).

¹³³ Santa Cruz, 03.02.2016.

and economically weaker, demands from the two lowland departments alone have never gained national importance.

Being faced with these opposing prefects, who were increasingly supported by important economic players (see 6.2.1.) and attempting to meet the expectations of his supporters, Morales addressed the requests for self-determination/autonomy. In his inaugural speech in La Paz, he signalled a willingness to find joint solution:

Autonomy is not an invention of nobody. (...) We want autonomy, autonomy with solidarity, autonomy with reciprocity, autonomy where wealth is redistributed, autonomy for the indigenous pueblos, for the provinces, for the regions. We search for this and this should unite Bolivia (...). (Morales, cited by Página12, 2006, author's translation).

6.3.2. The Unity Pact

With the erupting social conflicts of the early 2000s, indigenous peoples' and peasant organisations united in their rejection of neoliberalism, the established political parties and hope for change. In the aftermath of the above-mentioned 2002 March, they began working on a proposal for the convocation of a constituent assembly and in September 2004, the Unity Pact was founded¹³⁴. After Morales ratified the convocation of the assembly with Law 3364/2006, they started preparing a joint proposal for a new constitution (Garcés, 2011, p.49). The coming together of the different organisations in one space is considered of great historical value to the pact (Interviews 8,30,93). Three main blocks were present and even though the lines between them are not always clear-cut, the main differences are as follows:

- ❖ **Highland peoples' organisations** like CONAMAQ, whose members saw themselves as indigenous, yet preferred the concept *originario* (original)¹³⁵. Due to their indigenous majority in Bolivia, they did not want to adopt an autonomy model for states with indigenous minorities (Interview 94). Wanting to change the state altogether, they advocated the pluri-national idea.
- ❖ **Lowland peoples' organisations** like CIDOB, whose members understood themselves as indigenous. Representing mainly small minority groups¹³⁶, they rejected seeing peoples as nations (CEJIS, 2013).
- ❖ **Peasant organisations** like CSUTCB, Bartolinas¹³⁷ and *Interculturales*, for which social class generally mattered more than ethnicity and peoples' self-determination was not a concern. They view land as a mercantile object, not sharing the integral vision of territory with the other two blocks (Interview 8). This block is seen as the closest ally and key support group of Morales, who had close ties with CSUTCB (Interview 21). In line with the MAS-IPSP' agenda, they advocated the recuperation of the self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*.

¹³⁴ For more detail, see AA.VV. (2011).

¹³⁵ Representatives of these organisations argued that the indigenous category would directly refer to the mistaken and ethnocentric denomination '*indios*', the label used by the Spanish (Rivera Mazorco and Arispe Barrientos, 2006). Additionally, as it just makes reference to the inhabitants of the Americas, it seems regional and not universal like Western Philosophy – the term 'original people' in turn would be more holistic, powerful and unifying (ibid.).

¹³⁶ Following the 2001 and 2012 censuses, the lowland indigenous peoples made up 3.3 per cent of the population – with group size varying strongly from a couple of families to over 100,000 (CEJIS, 2013). Out of the 36 recognised languages in the 2009 CPE, 33 are associated with peoples from the lowlands and valleys.

¹³⁷ This is the National Federation of Peasant Women of Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa.

The organisations entered the negotiations with different ideas of the new state¹³⁸, but to draft a common proposal, they had to find a compromise. In 2006-07, intensive debates revolved around how to find a balance between a unitary state tying Bolivians together (key concern of the peasants) and pluri-nationalism, aim at decolonisation of state and society (advocated by CONAMAQ) (Garcés, 2011, p.52; AA.VV., 2011). The 'tenor (...) was to respect the autonomy of each while working together on common demands and proposals' (Garcés, 2011, p.48). This vision is reflected in the pluralist conception of identity in the new IOC ('Indigenous-Original-Peasant') subject (Interview 8) and the pluri-national concept, through which all would be recognised in a non-hierarchical way (Interviews 86,104).

Yet, to find a compromise, the envisioned state organisation needed to be asymmetric, so that some entities would be based on the republican state with its borders, while others should be organised around indigenous peoples' territories (Interview 93). Autonomies were not envisioned as solely decentralised entities in a predominantly mono-cultural state, but as strengthening self-determination, and, hence, a mechanism to recover sovereignty of the colonised, oppressed peoples (Garcés, 2011, p.56). This came closer to the pluri-national state than other proposals presented at this time (see 6.2.1.). In August 2006, the draft included three types of autonomy: AIOC ('Indigenous-Original-Peasant' Autonomy), urban-peasant and regional autonomies. After a year of negotiations, it had become more complex with six types of autonomies (Garcés, 2011, p.58; AA.VV., 2011, p.65). The concepts remained unclearly defined, which also reflects the difficulties in finding a common denominator (Interview 93).

Such a seemingly inclusive compromise had not been possible for all controversial aspects. Regarding natural resources, the final proposal represented the peasants' vision more than the indigenous organisations' ideas. The powerful peasant block – also fuelled by the above-mentioned nationalisation of the hydrocarbon sector (Law 3058/2005) –, advocated a model in which non-renewable resources are owned by all Bolivians and only renewable resources are locally held (Garcés, 2013, p.34). This was underpinned by a nationalist-unifying rhetoric – also found in the MAS-IPSP' discourse – that undermined the demands for peoples' self-determination (Interview 84). The incorporation of the peasants' vision into the final proposal, in which other organisations noted their disagreement, indicates that the peasant block as '*base dura*' of the MAS-IPSP had been the strongest block (Interviews 93,94). In turn, particularly, the lowland peoples are perceived as having lost out (Interview 5). Nevertheless, for them the Unity Pact was a key forum for positioning their demands on the national stage (Interview 17).

¹³⁸ For an overview, see AA.VV. (2011, pp.233-237).

The final proposal would become a key reference point for the MAS-IPSP in the constituent assembly (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.12; Interviews 8,17) and so, the indigenous people were, for the first time, subject in Bolivian state transformation (Interview 104). Yet, García Linera claimed that parts of the proposal presented a more radical position than necessary and possible (Schavelzon, 2013, p.178).

6.3.3. The Constituent Assembly of 2006-07¹³⁹

Morales kept his predecessor's promise and simultaneously with the election of assembly members in July 2006, a referendum on departmental autonomy was held. The MAS-IPSP openly rejected the idea (Interviews 8,11,20,56) and often framed the quest as a means of fragmentation driven by the (neoliberal) oligarchy (Interview 75). For the *media luna* opposition, the government failed to recognise it as a legitimate demand and did not understand the issue (Interview 69).

Overall, 57.5 per cent of votes were cast against departmental autonomy (Georgetown University, 2017). Yet, in the four *media luna* departments, the majority of voters opted for departmental autonomy (see Table 7) and the Convocation Law 3365/2006 established that the results were binding for the assembly with respect to those departments where the majority voted in favour (Art. 2). With this, the departmental autonomy had to be in the new Constitution.

When the constituent assembly was convened on the 6th of August 2006 in Sucre, MAS-IPSP leaders did not seem to have an elaborate vision of autonomy/ies that responded to the different demands for autonomy (Interview 23). Initially, Morales pitched autonomy of the *pueblo* against the supposed autonomy of the oligarchy (Página12, 2006). He connected autonomy to the idea of sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo*, requiring leaders to consult their popular base and to be subject to rotation. Yet, with the constituent assembly, they needed to find a way of addressing the departmental autonomy. When confirming their demands, the *media luna* was supported by Catalan intellectuals and activists, who assisted in the development of their proposals (Interviews 18,72).

The internal regulations of the assembly

Debates on the internal regulations of the assembly stalled the advancement of the process for the first seven months of the prescribed 12 months period. Particularly contested was the required majority for approval (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.37): The Convocation Law stated that the approval of the constitution needed two thirds of its present members while the opposition forces argued that the same should apply for the commissions, in which key negotiations took place. Even though the MAS-

¹³⁹ For a comprehensive description of events, see Schavelzon (2013).

IPSP alone had 53.7 per cent of the seats¹⁴⁰, together with its allies it did not reach the two thirds and wanted approval in the commissions of 50+1 per cent (Buitrago, 2007, p.192).

Subsequently, opposition politicians 'in defence of democracy' went on hunger strikes and confrontations turned increasingly violent. In mid-December, the 3rd *cabildo*, took place in *media luna* departments, pressuring the assembly to fulfil its mandate concerning the autonomies. In Santa Cruz, it became known as the '*cabildo* of the million' as they estimate that over 1,000,000 people participated (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-c; Antelo Vaca, 2015; Interview 35).

Additionally, one of Morales' main opponents, Cochabamba's Prefect Reyes Villa¹⁴¹, who had previously not been associated with demands for autonomy, called for another autonomy referendum. For him, 'people thought autonomy meant you would need a passport to travel from one province to another' (cited by McDonnell, 2007). Violent confrontations occurred, during which the prefecture *cochabambina* was set on fire and two people died (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.32). MAS-IPSP adversaries spoke of a 'Stalinist conspiracy' against the opposition prefects (Lessmann, 2010, p.140).

At this moment, departmental autonomy had become an umbrella under which some groups previously opposed to one another¹⁴² joined forces against the government, seeking to prevent a MAS-IPSP hegemony in the assembly (Peñaranda, 2009, p.119). Yet, this did not mean that the opposition was entirely united. For Doria Medina, UN leader, the regional opposition and a radical group from Cochabamba sought to impede the assembly without a plan, but said 'today, we have to sabotage the agenda and tomorrow, we will see' (cited by Peñaranda, 2009, p.120, author's translation).

In mid-February, when the whole assembly appeared at risk, a compromise was found. It was agreed that while the approval *en detalle* and the final text would require two thirds of the present members, for the project *en grande* and the commission reports, 50 per cent +1 would be needed (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.43). With this, the assembly could start working.

Initial plans with different perspectives on autonomy and models of state

In a first step, the different groupings of the assembly presented their vision of the type of state they desired to the plenary, in which different ideas concerning autonomy became apparent:

¹⁴⁰ For results, votes and seats, see Peñaranda (2009, p.112).

¹⁴¹ He started his political career in the conservative ADN and later founded the New Republican Force (NFR). Having been Cochabamba's mayor (1993-2000), he stood from NFR as presidential candidate in 2002 and finished third (Georgetown University, 2017).

¹⁴² These were mainly those directly associated with the autonomy quests and those affiliated with national political parties in the post-democratisation system that fell apart with the rise of the MAS.

MAS-IPSP and allies	Opposition
MAS-IPSP (137 seats): indigenous, municipal, provincial, departmental and regional autonomy	PODEMOS (60 seats): departmental and municipal autonomy, indigenous municipalities
MOP (3): 'original' nations as part of the territoriality	UN (8): departmental and municipal autonomy
AYRA (2): autonomy of the indigenous <i>pueblos</i> and 'original' nations, territorial division according to ancestral territories	MNR (8): departmental, regional and municipal autonomy
MCSFA (1): autonomy and decentralisation	MNR-FRI (1): departmental autonomy and self-government of 'original' <i>pueblos</i>
MBL (8, partly aligned with MAS): departmental and municipal autonomy	A3-MNR (2): departmental and municipal autonomy
CN (5, partly aligned with MAS-IPSP): <i>no consistent vision</i>	APB (3): departmental and municipal autonomy
ASP (2, partly aligned with MAS-IPSP): <i>no consistent vision</i>	AAI (1): departmental autonomy
	MIR (1): departmental and municipal autonomy
AS (6): Departmental, regional and municipal autonomy	

Table 3: Visions of the autonomies in the constituent assembly (based on Böhrt Irahola (2015, pp.44-47))

Both MAS-IPSP and PODEMOS responded to demands from the apparent opponents. PODEMOS incorporated demands from indigenous *pueblos* – but the indigenous autonomy could be resolved with the already existing figure of the indigenous municipality seen as subordinated to the departmental level (Interview 103) (see 6.2.2.).

Following Morales' earlier suggestions of autonomy for the *pueblo*, the MAS-IPSP leaders increasingly adopted the autonomies rather broadly as their own project. The question was 'How do we counteract the *cambas* who want to divide [Bolivia]?'¹⁴³ (Interview 82). For an enthusiastic *MASista*, they had realised that the people wanted autonomy (Interview 104). For others, it was a strategic move to 'climb on the bandwagon' (Interviews 13,80). A local researcher finds that 'as the *media luna* proposed I don't know how many autonomies, the MAS-IPSP came out with more autonomies'¹⁴⁴ (Interview 7). The inclusion of the indigenous autonomy was part of this counterproposal (Interviews 7,25,39), set up 'in order to slow down the attack of the other'¹⁴⁵ (Interview 86). Something similar is said about the regional autonomy, which was incorporated to weaken hydrocarbon-rich departments (Interview 72).

For the MAS-IPSP' allies, Bolivia was imagined as a pluri-national state, while opposition proposals included adjectives like intercultural, multinational or multicultural, with emphasis on the Bolivian nation (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, pp.44-47). The MAS-IPSP itself, as in the case of the autonomies, made a broad proposal of pluri-national, inter-cultural and pluri-lingual Bolivia (ibid.). In all consistent

¹⁴³ Oruro, 19.04.2016.

¹⁴⁴ La Paz, 05.04.2016.

¹⁴⁵ Oruro, 21.04.2016.

proposals, Bolivia was envisioned as a unitary state (ibid.). While some argue that since the traumatic 1898-9 federal rebellion (see 5.5.), the federal question is a taboo (Interviews 32,72), others find it unrealistic to move from a heavily centralised unitary state to a federal state or similar (Interview 27). A territorial reorganisation of the state, demanded by some indigenous representatives fighting for their *different* state was not on the official agenda. A MASista explains

The initial conception was that the indigenous pueblos also recuperate their territory, but this was not possible because other rules of the game had already been established, another type of administration, another vision, another conception, which caused the actual territorial order of the country in departments, in provinces, in municipalities was respected¹⁴⁶ (Interview 104).

In the MAS-IPSP block, the highlands enjoyed stronger representation than the lowlands and the peasant block was the largest one (Interview 23). Therefore, this is a similar constellation to the aforementioned Unity Pact. For its indigenous members, the assembly was marked by subordination or 'sub-alternatisation' instead of decolonisation (Garcés, 2013, p.34). They were faced with racism, discrimination and sometimes violent attacks (see edited volume of Defensor del Pueblo and Universidad de la Cordillera, 2008).

The work of the commissions¹⁴⁷, the question of the capital and rising tensions

After public gatherings in the nine departments¹⁴⁸, which led to tumultuous situations in the departmental autonomy strongholds, the 21 commissions¹⁴⁹ of the assembly began their work. The MAS-IPSP and allies had the majority of seats in all commissions (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, pp.50-52). Yet, progress was limited and in July 2007, all commissions handed in one majority and one minority report, which showed the incapacity/unwillingness to compromise (Interview 23). Additionally, some reports were incoherent and insufficiently elaborated (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.53). A key problem was the seemingly irreconcilably different visions of land and natural resource management: While the MAS-IPSP opted for national control of non-renewable resources, for example, the opposition, sought more regional control, which was against the idea of peoples' self-determination (Peñaranda, 2009, p.118). Some topics were also heavily contested among MAS-IPSP and its allies and inside the MAS-IPSP itself (Schavelzon, 2013, p.156). When all reports were submitted, less than three weeks were left until the end of the one-year period and prolongation was hotly debated (ibid., p.157). In August, the Congress approved Law 3728/2007, following which the new deadline was in mid-December 2007.

¹⁴⁶ Cochabamba, 01.06.2016.

¹⁴⁷ For more detail, see Schavelzon (2013) or Böhrt Irahola (2015).

¹⁴⁸ In these, around 3,000 proposals were collected from civil society organisations and so on (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.49).

¹⁴⁹ For a list, see Gamboa Rocabado (n.d.).

The work of the commissions was overshadowed by the emergence of the question over the capital (Ibaibarriaga, 2007). Sectors of the opposition had raised this issue and some representatives from Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca demanded '*capitalidad plena*' for Sucre, meaning reversing the outcome of the 1898-99 'federal rebellion' (see 5.5.) by moving the government seat and all government institutions back from La Paz (Peñaranda, 2009, pp.121-123; Schavelzon, 2013, pp.157-159). From the official side, this indicated that the opposition wanted to block the assembly, since the opposition knew that La Paz would never allow this (Peñaranda, 2009, p.123). For an opposition informant, bringing the matter onto the agenda had been an attempt to cause tensions within the MAS-IPSP block— much of what followed was an unintended consequence (Interview 72). The escalation started with the buoying up of a civic movement for '*capitalidad plena*', in which the Civic Committee of Sucre played a crucial role (Azcuí, 2007). Shortly afterwards, the assembly members decided to eliminate the topic from the assembly's agenda, riots broke out (Ibaibarriaga, 2007). These protests continued for several weeks and temporarily paralysed the constituent process.

Simultaneously, the confrontational approach of the government towards the opposition prefects continued. In October, Morales released Supreme Decree 29322/2007, with which the departmental share of IDH royalties fell from 56.9 to 24.4 per cent, while the municipalities received 67 per cent instead of 34.5 per cent. The *media luna* prefects perceived this as a direct attack (Peñaranda, 2009, p.126).

Due to continued protests, the assembly in Sucre ended, since the safety of those involved could no longer be guaranteed. After the assembly moved to the *Liceo Militar*, some kilometres outside Sucre, the draft constitution was adopted *en grande* with the majority of assembly members, all associated with the MAS-IPSP, while the opposition was absent (Peñaranda, 2009, p.133). However, the next day, supposedly adopted texts were circulated which were different and the opposition claimed that the session had been illegal (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.61-62; Interview 72). Protests escalated and Chuquisaca's Prefect sought to mediate, but was accused of being a 'traitor' and fled after direct attacks on him. At this point, even the police moved away from Sucre.

Some days later, the oppositional prefects experienced another perceived attack from the MAS-IPSP. The enacted Dignity Pension Law 3791/2007 (see 7.5.3.) stated that the prefectures provide 30 per cent of their IDH for funding the universal pension scheme (Art. 9). Together with the above-mentioned decree, over 60 per cent of the IDH had de facto been taken away from the prefectures.

Shortly afterwards, through a quick – for some 'forced' – modification of the Law 3364/2006, the assembly's president gained powers to transfer the session to 'any place in the national territory' (Böhrt Irahola, 2015, p.63). A 411-article document was adopted in a 14-hour session in

Oruro in the second week of December. At the beginning of the session, the MAS-IPSP and its allies were present alongside with UN and MNR, while the largest opposition group PODEMOS was absent (Peñaranda, 2009, p.134; Böhrtr Irahola, 2015, p.63). Some of them joined later, claiming that the proceedings were irregular. The present UN leader is convinced that the MAS-IPSP would not have achieved the two thirds if PODEMOS had been present (cited by Peñaranda, 2009, pp.134-135). Still, the document was officially perceived as approved and some days later handed over to President Morales.

6.3.4. Post-assembly escalations and negotiations

While the MAS-IPSP celebrated the approval as a victory, Bolivia was at the cusp of un-governability. The opposition did not accept the constitution and continued to demand autonomy, at this point essentially referring to control over land and hydrocarbon resources, which the constitution reserved for the central state (Achtenberg, 2011). While the MAS-IPSP wanted to hold a referendum on the Constitution, the *media luna*, who had been supported by experts like the Catalan Joan Prats¹⁵⁰, (Interview 72), published autonomy statutes, which were designed to be adopted in a referendum.

As both sides attempted to block the other, tensions grew¹⁵¹ and the National Electoral Court ruled that the proposed referenda lacked convocation laws (Peñaranda, 2009, pp.140-142):

Furthermore, we mandate that this law must respect the 90-day minimum planning period (...). We advocate that the departmental governors cannot convoke referendums on autonomy statutes. This is the responsibility of Congress and Departmental Electoral Courts cannot mandate referendums, it is the National Electoral Court's job (cited by Andean Information Network, 2008).

Nevertheless, in the four *media luna* departments the statutes were adopted with over 75 per cent of vote in May and June (see Table 7). Due to the lack of legal mandate, the MAS-IPSP government and the Electoral Court declared the referenda illegal. Yet, since participation and approval rates had been high, the government could not ignore them.

In this tense situation, prefects and the government agreed to hold a recall referenda in the second week of August. Yet, this did not lead to a clear resolution, as not only president and vice-president, but also the *media luna* prefects were confirmed in their offices¹⁵². Nevertheless, the correlation of forces changed (Peñaranda, 2009, pp.144-146), as following the official results, Morales' support in the lowlands increased, which strengthened MAS-IPSP' position and made the approval of the

¹⁵⁰ Prats was married to the Teresa Ossio, the daughter of Luis Ossio, who served as Bolivian vice-president under Paz Zamora (1989-1993). She was Bolivian Ambassador to Spain (2004-2006).

¹⁵¹ For more detail, see Böhrtr Irahola (2015, pp.66-69).

¹⁵² Only the prefects of La Paz and Cochabamba were not confirmed in office. With this, the opposition lost Morales' fierce opponent, Reyes Villa.

constitution more likely (Böhrt Irahola, 2009, p.59). That same night, MAS-IPSP leaders proposed negotiations on making constitution and *media luna* autonomy statutes compatible (Romero Bonifaz, 2009, p.15).

However, the *media luna* prefects were unwilling to accept the results of the referenda and there was further escalation¹⁵³: Santa Cruz' Prefect Costas claimed that he wanted to control taxes, and the police and would implement the autonomy statute. When action was taken, tensions within the opposition deepened and splits occurred since, for some, this went too far. In early September, opposition groups started to occupy government offices, airports and block roads more systematically, which affected the transport of goods to the highlands. In addition, a bomb exploded in the main gas pipeline, affecting exports to Brazil. This was seen as a massive effort to destabilise the government and the minister of the government spoke of a 'civil coup' (Webber, 2008). Part of the response was that the government asked the US Ambassador Goldberg to leave Bolivia, since the MAS-IPSP accused the US of supporting the lowland elites. Morales declared that '[w]e don't want people here who conspire against our unity' (cited by Friedman-Rudovsky, 2008).

A day after declaring Goldman a *persona non-grata*, the 'Massacre of Pando' left around 20 people dead and over 50 wounded (González, 2008). Achtenberg recalls that

a protest march (...) by some 1,000 pro-MAS indigenous peasants and their supporters was ambushed by truckloads of armed cívicos, waiting behind trenches dug by local road crews to block their passage along the road to the departmental capital of Cobija (Achtenberg, 2011).

Following that, Morales' deployed the military to Pando and some days later, Pando's Prefect was arrested¹⁵⁴. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) sided with the government (González, 2008) and with this, Argentina and Brazil, the key importers of Bolivian hydrocarbons did not support the opposition (Böhrt Irahola, 2009, p.59; Romero Bonifaz, 2009, p.18). The remaining *media luna* prefects, led by *tarijeño* Prefect Cossío opted for negotiating with the government.

However, these were not the first negotiations, since an informal commission held meetings since June. Figures from both sides tried to find a way of bringing the two extremes together and pacify the country (Interview 41). It included the PODEMOS Senators Böhrt (Irahola) and Ruiz, both close to Cossío, the *MASista* Romero (Bonifaz) and the President of the Chamber of Deputies Novillo (Peñaranda, 2009. pp.161-165) – Böhrt and Romero had already worked together on a publication, asking whether and how the different proposals for a constitution were compatible (Böhrt Irahola *et*

¹⁵³ For a summary of events, see, for example, Böhrt Irahola (2009, pp.56-59) and Peñaranda (2009, pp.152-165).

¹⁵⁴ In March 2017, he was sentenced to 15 year in prison (Corz, 2017).

al., 2008). This 'clandestine table' is seen by the figures involved as crucial for moving the positions closer together.

Following that, Cochabamba negotiations¹⁵⁵ which started on the 25th of September saw representatives from government and prefectures come together (Romero Bonifaz, 2009, p.19; Schavelzon, 2013, p.186). After one week, the representatives from the opposition prefectures left the tables on the pretext of the detention of a *tarijeño* who was accused of having participated in a terrorist attack against a gas pipeline in Tarija (Romero Bonifaz, 2009, p.20). At first sight the negotiation appeared to have failed, since no agreement was signed (Peñaranda, 2009, p.181). Nevertheless, following an involved informant, the prefecture representatives had achieved a favourable deal, but could not go back, saying that they had come to an agreement with the detested government (Interview 72). An important, visible success of the prefects was that the regional autonomy could not cross departmental boundaries, as the Oruro version had established (Böhrtr Irahola, 2009, pp.95-96; Interviews 4,72,103). As a result, the large hydrocarbon-rich Chaco region was prevented from forming a regional autonomy – and later eventually a department.

The second week of negotiations included representatives of MAS prefectures and the Federation of Municipal Associations. In addition, two consultative meetings were held with representatives from CIDOB and CONAMAQ and another one with representatives from the Chaco region (Romero Bonifaz, 2009, p.20). However, critics argue that these meetings were short and the government would not take those perspectives into account – the government had even wished to cancel them altogether, yet *pro forma*, they were needed (Interview 9). NGO workers with long-term experience of working with indigenous people, who closely followed the assembly, do not remember these meetings (Interviews 10,14).

After Cochabamba, Morales convened negotiations with the presidents of the Chambers of Congress and the leaders of the *bancadas* of the political parties (Romero Bonifaz, 2009, p.21). Later, a special commission was established in Congress. Early in the congressional negotiations, the MAS-IPSP organised a march with social movements and indigenous organisations (but not CIDOB), which was, according to the vice-president, to ensure that the negotiations would not go on indefinitely (in Peñaranda, 2009, p.185). In the following negotiations, mostly between the government and PODEMOS as a main opposition force, IDH and autonomies did not emerge as controversial issues, since they had been largely resolved in Cochabamba (Romero Bonifaz in Peñaranda, 2009, p.201). Instead, the maximum surface of agricultural property, presidential re-election and condition for a partial reform of the constitution were among the contested themes and the concerns of the

¹⁵⁵ For a detailed account, see Peñaranda (2009, pp.176-183).

opposition were incorporated into the draft (Romero Bonifaz, 2009, pp.22-25). Part of the congressional pact was that the 'indigenous-original-peasant' (IOC) jurisdiction could – as desired by PODEMOS – only be applied to members of the IOC *pueblos* (ibid., p.25). Without much debate, the MAS-IPSP-dominated Congress adopted the document, in which around 25 per cent of the articles were different from the Oruro version¹⁵⁶.

In the referendum in late-January, the constitution was approved with 61.4 per cent of votes cast, yet, in the four *media luna* departments, the majority of voters rejected the document (Georgetown University, 2017). President Morales declared the constitution on the 7th of February 2009. In the official reading, as compromises were found, the constitutional text is a political pact that integrates the different visions of the state (Böhrt Irahola, 2009, p.61). For example, the new autonomy regime involves, alongside already existing municipal autonomy, departmental, regional and indigenous autonomies. Yet, more critical voices suggest that it did not result in one coherent model of state, but in an inherently contradictory and inconsistent document. If and how this is the case will be examined in the next chapter.

6.4. Summing-up

This chapter unpacked how the different struggles for autonomy have emerged and evolved in the second half of the 20th century. It then went on analysing how these struggles became translated into the pluri-national Constitution. On the one hand, for indigenous peoples' self-determination has either involved seeking state protection against livelihood threats or altering the logic of the state altogether for achieving one that facilitates their self-determination, on the other, autonomy has also been advocated for enhancing political leverage as well as territorial and resource control against the central state. These strands of struggles are closely entwined and in tension with each other. With their incorporations into the neoliberal state modality through reforms, something was lost in translation, when these were made more compatible with the neoliberal agenda.

With the rising protests in the early 21st century and the growing importance of the MAS-IPSP, which had since early on demanded sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo*, supported by an increasingly powerful block, in particular the peasants, quick motion became necessary. The neoliberal multicultural modality could not sufficiently respond to the popular but incompatible demands from different sectors of the Bolivian society, and the state managers were incapable of facilitating growth.

The crucial pacts that were necessary for re-establishing order involved the MAS-IPSP and the national opposition, partly backed by key economic players, which also had an interest in the survival of the

¹⁵⁶ For a detailed list of changes, see Romero Bonifaz (2009) or Böhrt Iraho (2009).

Bolivian state form. In this key part of the re-founding, the indigenous people did not play a crucial role – yet, some key demands had been entered into the MAS-IPSP agenda, also – but not only – to counter the oppositional demand for autonomy. Yet, demands for peoples' self-determination were inherently in tension with the MAS-IPSP idea of self-determination of the *pueblo*. In the mediation process, the indigenous people were somewhat included, but for achieving change they needed to adapt to rules that were not necessarily theirs (for example, deciding by majority) and suffered discrimination, among others.

Overall, when mediating the demands into the pluri-national state, all struggles, including those of indigenous people who had wanted a *different* state were altered insofar as they became more compatible with the export-oriented economic model, which appears to need a strong central state for the most profitable accumulation. The control over key non-renewable resources remained with the central state, which was advocated as enhancing the self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*. This is in stark tension with pluri-nationalism as envisioned by indigenous people and the demand for a deepening of decentralisation.

Nevertheless, the umbrella demand for peoples' self-determination was incorporated into the new constitution and the new state-recognised AIOC ('Indigenous-Original-Peasant' Autonomy) is key in this translation. However, the AIOC is part of a larger autonomy regime, including municipal, regional and departmental autonomies. In the next chapter, I explore how the new autonomy regime has in the new state modality been translated by the central state components.

Chapter 7. The Pluri-national State: Translation of autonomy into and by central state components

7.1. Introduction

After having looked how the pluri-national state and the new autonomy regime came into being, in this and the following chapter, I examine how the scenario has unfolded since then. In the present chapter, I focus on how the demands for autonomy were translated into, and by, the central state and its components, which are Constitution, rules, enforcing mechanisms, government.

For this, I start by outlining the autonomy framework established in the 2009 Constitution (CPE). I then show how it was fostered in the early days of the pluri-national modality by rules, enforcing mechanisms and government, with the latter exercising considerable power over the former ones. This enables me to see how the three different visions of autonomy I highlighted in the previous chapter have become apparent in the different components of pluri-national Bolivia. Next, I look at how the government, particularly since the end of the resource boom, has increasingly undertaken measures to limit the other two visions of autonomy, yet without reconciling the tension inherent in the modality. Finally, I demonstrate that it remains flexible as to which vision of autonomy is brought to the forefront in the international sphere.

7.2. Autonomy framework in the CPE

Following Article 1 CPE, pluri-national Bolivia is, among others, a unitary state with autonomies. Article 269 I CPE states that Bolivia is territorially organised in departments, provinces, municipalities and IOC territories (TIOC)¹⁵⁷. At each level of state organisation, territorial autonomous entities (ETA) are or can be constituted. At departmental level, the departmental autonomy, in municipalities, it is either a municipal autonomy or an AIOC ('Indigenous-Original-Peasant' Autonomy) and in a TIOC, an AIOC can be established. The AIOC is special as it is the single most important category that concretises the constitutionally guaranteed free determination of the peoples and nations (Art. 2 CPE). Finally, different neighbouring municipalities or provinces can form a regional autonomy or a regional AIOC, if formed by AIOC.

The state-recognised autonomy implies three aspects: First, the direct election of authorities, secondly, the administration of economic resources, and finally, the exercise of the legislative, regulative, controlling and executive powers within the range of granted jurisdiction, competences and attributes (Art. 272 LMAD). While the first leaves little room for interpretation, the CPE remains

¹⁵⁷ With the seventh transitory regulation CPE and DS 727/2010, the TCO category is replaced by IOC territory or TIOC. The territory includes areas of production, areas of use and conservation of natural resources and spaces of socio spiritual and cultural reproduction (Art. 403 II CPE).

mostly silent about the resources of the ETAs. Article 305 CPE states that every assignment or transfer of authority must be accompanied by the determination of the source of economic and financial resources that are necessary for its exercise. Law regulates the departmental, regional, municipal and AIOC income (Art. 340 CPE). Nevertheless, Article 341 lists some sources of income of the departmental ETAs, which has to do with the pact between government and prefects (see 6.3.4.). With regards to the third aspect, focusing on competences, the CPE establishes a more detailed basis for further legislation.

Article 298 CPE I lists 22 privative¹⁵⁸ central state competences, among them, hydrocarbons (No 18) and general policies over land, territory and titling (No 17). Furthermore, the central state has 38 exclusive¹⁵⁹ competences, including strategic natural resources like minerals (Art. 298 II No 4 CPE). For the AIOC, this puts severe limitation on autonomy, especially not reflecting the concerns of the lowland peoples (Interview 3). Reserving certain competences, in particular hydrocarbons, for the central state makes a distortion of the extractivist-based growth model less likely.

Exclusive competences of the departmental autonomies, listed in Article 300 I CPE, involve promotion and planning of, for example, employment and natural patrimony at the departmental level. With regards to departmental public services, transport and infrastructure, for example, it exceeds promotion and planning and involves the development and execution of projects, which must observe the CPE and national legislation. Proper policies can be developed with regards to sports and conservation of patrimony, among others. Some analysts point out that competences are fewer and less relevant compared to those of the prefectures (Interview 20): For example, the presidentially appointed prefect was the departmental commandant of the police, while in the new scenario, the police are directly subordinated to the national level (Art. 298 I No 6 CPE). This can be seen as a means of limiting autonomy.

Even though all ETAs have the same constitutional rank (Art. 276 CPE), the regional autonomy does not have competences in itself (Art. 301 CPE), but requires that the departmental assembly transfers competences with two thirds of the members (Art. 280 III CPE). In addition, unlike the municipal and departmental autonomies, the regional autonomy also lacks legislative powers (Art. 281 CPE). In other words, despite having an assembly, the regional ETAs cannot promulgate laws, but remains subordinated to departmental laws – and is hence rather a space of joint planning.

¹⁵⁸ Privative are competences reserved for the central state level (Art. 297 I No 1 CPE).

¹⁵⁹ Exclusive are competences in which a level of government has legislative, regulative and executive powers and can transfer and delegate the regulative and executing powers (Art. 297 I No 2 CPE).

Following Article 303 I CPE, the AIOC assumes the competences of the municipalities, listed in Article 302 CPE in accordance with the institutional development and their own cultural characteristics. Article 304 CPE lists 23 exclusive, four shared¹⁶⁰ and ten concurrent¹⁶¹ competences, the AIOC can exercise additionally, some of which are repetitive. Key among these, and not found in the competence catalogue of the other ETAs, is the exercise of IOC jurisdiction, following its own rules and procedures (Art. 304 I No 8 CPE). In addition, the development and exercise of mechanisms of prior consultation is included (Art. 304 I No 21 CPE).

A crucial challenge in the constitutionally established autonomy regime are parallel competences, meaning that some competences like productive infrastructure, tourism and cultural goods, are listed for departmental and municipal ETAs, and can hence also be exercised by AIOC and/or transferred to the regional ETAs. To function effectively further regulation and cooperation of different ETAs is needed. Similar challenges also arise with regards to concurrent competences and shared competence. Based on prior experiences regarding the interaction between different state entities, some analysts suggest that this model can never work and was not set up to function, but to cause fragmentation and distortion (Interviews 32,52).

The competences given to departmental and municipal ETAs do not appear different to those assigned in a nation state, making these autonomies appear more as a type of state organisation that aims at deepening decentralisation. Only in the specific AIOC competences, does it become apparent that the pluri-national state might be distinct from its predecessors. Yet, the specific competences do not compensate for the severe limitations of the AIOC in the CPE compared to the vision of a pluri-national state (Interview 36). A key theme is the above-mentioned resources control. The AIOC has the exclusive competences of managing and administrating the renewable natural resources like water and wind (Art. 304 I No 3 CPE). For an interviewee,

[i]t's a strong contradiction, no? You have autonomy, but some 60 centimetres further down, it's not mine anymore, it is state-owned (...) if a landowner has had it, what is below was also his and not the state's ¹⁶² (Interview 74).

7.3. Realising the autonomy regime

7.3.1. Initial government support of the autonomy regime

As indicated in the previous chapter, during the constituent assembly, the government had moved towards supporting an autonomy regime. On the day of the promulgation of the CPE, a Ministry of

¹⁶⁰ Concurrent are competences in which the legislation corresponds to the central state level while the other levels simultaneously exercise regulative and executive powers (Art. 297 I No 3 CPE).

¹⁶¹ Shared (*compartidas*) are competences, which are under the basic national legislation, while legislation of development corresponds to the ETAs, in accordance with their character and nature. The regulative and executive powers correspond to the ETAs (Art. 297 I No 4 CPE).

¹⁶² Oruro, 12.04.2016.

Autonomies was established, which was subdivided into a Vice-Ministry of Autonomies, which encompassed a General Direction (GD) of Autonomy and Accreditation of competences, another GD of Fiscal Financial Decentralisation, and a Vice-Ministry of Territorial Organisation (Art. 13, 29, DS 29894/2009). While the first vice-ministry was more concerned with the concretisation of the new autonomy regime, the second continued the tasks from previous ministries concerned with planning and state organisation (Interview 9).

A day later, Minister of Rural, Agricultural and Environmental Development Carlos Romero (Bonifaz), was appointed minister of autonomies. He had long-term experience working with indigenous peoples, having been Executive Director of CEJIS, a key think tank in Bolivia for some years, during which the organisation played a crucial role in supporting the 2002 march for the constituent assembly. Romero had been a member of the constituent assembly on a seat of indigenous organisations and supporting the MAS-IPSP. He became an important figure, presiding over the 'Commission of Renewable Natural Resources, Land-Territory and Environment' and as shown in 6.3.4., he was crucial in later negotiations. His appointment, with his association with indigenous movements and deep understanding of the pact between government and prefects, was perceived as an indication that the government took the autonomy regime seriously (Interviews 7,9).

Support for the autonomies seems to be also reflected in the MAS-IPSP's 2010-2015 Government Plan '*Primero Bolivia y sus ciudadanos - rumbo a una Bolivia Líder*', (MAS-IPSP, 2009), which – unlike previous plans¹⁶³ – paid attention to the autonomies. Throughout the 156-page document, 104 words start with 'autonom...' and 'autonomía' appears 60 times. In addition, a whole section was dedicated to 'Autonomy really for all' (ibid., pp.70-73), which can be read as a pledge for autonomy as self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*.

7.3.2. The framework law (LMAD)

Following the CPE which demands the passing of some framework laws within 180 days from the installation of the Pluri-national Assembly (1st Transitory disposition IV CPE), in mid-2010, the 'Framework Law of Autonomies and Decentralisation Andrés Ibáñez' 031/2010 (LMAD) was enacted. It was named after the *cruceño* leader who had fought for a federal state in the 1870s¹⁶⁴.

Elaboration

The elaboration of the LMAD had been coordinated within the new Ministry of Autonomies. For an involved interviewee, the other Ministries were consulted and their wishes included in distributing the competences (Interview 9). It became apparent that some Ministries, above all, the Ministry of

¹⁶³ Key are the MAS-IPSP's first Government Plan (MAS-IPSP, 2006) and National Development Plan (PND, 2007) (see 6.3.1.).

¹⁶⁴ See 5.5. and López Mercado (2014, pp.95-98).

Economy and Public Finance (MEFP), were more powerful than the Ministry of Autonomies. Participation of social movements and public consultations in the elaboration were discussed and some attempts were made, but overall, the maxim was to make it function (Interview 9). High-level bureaucrats believed too much public engagement caused distortions and the political actors had an interest in keeping their power centralised (Interview 9). *Media luna* authorities complained about lack of consultation (Interview 37).

Article 271 II CPE established that the LMAD would require the approval of 2/3 of the Pluri-national Assembly and with the grand majority of the MAS-IPSP, the law passed after superficial debate without undergoing important changes in the assembly (Interview 9). This indicates that the government has the MAS-IPSP members of the Assembly under tight control. For a former opposition senator, summarising the process, the law established 'autonomy for all', but in the way the government wanted (Interview 86).

Competences and organisation

In the LMAD, 20 articles are dedicated to competences, indicating which aspects are handled by which ETAs (Art. 81-100 LMAD). All of them, along with health, transport and natural resources, resemble traditional state tasks, suggesting that this pluri-national modality does not differ from its predecessors, making the autonomy regime again appear as a form of decentralisation. Despite continued criticism that the competence regime would violate the idea of autonomy per se (Interview 80), interviewees find it questionable that the LMAD clarifies the distribution of tasks well – but it is still clear that the central state is very powerful (Interviews 32,52). In addition, since the ETAs have constitutionally the same rank, their relationship is not clearly established in the CPE or in the LMAD, apart from general guidelines like serving the needs of the population.

The LMAD establishes tools and mechanisms for coordination between the central state and ETAs which is needed for a fully functioning pluri-national state (Art. 120 LMAD). Next to the Integral Planning System (see 7.5.2.), Sectorial Coordination Councils¹⁶⁵, and intergovernmental conventions, the most important ones are the following two:

First, the National Council of Autonomies (CNA) is established for political coordination. Its members are the president, who presides over the council, three ministers (presidency, development planning and autonomy), the nine governors, five representatives of the Federation of Municipal Associations (FAM) and the AIOC and one representative of the regional autonomies (Art. 123 LMAD). The Council

¹⁶⁵ This instrument is consultative, serving to facilitate an agreement between the central state government and the autonomous governments. These consist of the minister of the matter and authorities of the autonomous governments, who are competent in the relevant area (Art. 132 LMAD).

meets twice a year, convened by the president, with extraordinary meetings possible (Art. 124 LMAD). Secondly, the State Service of Autonomies (SEA), which is responsible for the technical coordination and facilitation of the management of the autonomies (Art. 125 LMAD). Under tuition of the Ministry of Autonomies, it supports and assists the ETAs and the central state in the implementation and development of the autonomy regime and can for this purpose be consulted by all ETAs and the central state (Art. 126 LMAD).

Resources

The LMAD concretises the incoming resources of the ETAs as follows:

Income of ETAs
Departmental ETAs (Art. 341 CPE, Art. 104 LMAD)
Departmental royalties (<i>regalías</i>) (Art. 104 No 1 LMAD) <u>Hydrocarbon Royalties:</u> Eleven per cent of audit production of hydrocarbons in the departments (Art. 52 No 1. Law 3058/2005); compensatory royalty for Beni (2/3) and Pando (1/3) (one per cent of audit national production of hydrocarbons) (Art. 52 No 2) <u>Mining Royalties:</u> If mining activities take place, companies pay royalties to departments and municipalities – following Law 3787/2007, 85 per cent go to the producing department, and 15 to the producing municipality (Art. 100). Transfers from the central government from hydrocarbon taxes (Art. 104 No 8 LMAD) <u>The direct tax on hydrocarbons (IDH):</u> 12.5 per cent of the IDH go to each of the producer departments and 31.25 per cent the non-producer departments (6.25 for each) (Art. 2 DS 28421/2005). 56.9 per cent of these were assigned to the prefectures. Since October 2007, the share of the prefecture fell to 24.4 per cent (DS 29322/2007) (see 6.3.4.) <u>The Special Tax on hydrocarbons and its derivative (IEHD):</u> 25 per cent of the are assigned to the prefectures (50 per cent by population, 50 per cent equally) (Transitory regulation 8 LMAD) Transfers for the delegation or transfer of competences (Art. 104 No 9) Other (potential) sources (Art. 104 No 2-7 LMAD) Departmental taxes; fees and special contributions; departmental patents for the exploitation of natural resources; income from sales of goods and services; credits and loans; bequests, donations and similar
Regional ETAs (Art. 107 LMAD)
Transfers of royalties due to the exploitation of natural resources Transfers from the ETAs that constitute it Other (potential) sources Fees and special contributions, Income from sales of goods and services
AIOC ETAs (Art. 106 LMAD) (similar to the municipal ETAs, Art. 105 LMAD)
Transfers from the co-participation and IDH (No 8) Transfers from departmental royalties for exploitations of natural resources (No 6) Assigned taxes (No 1) Transfers for the delegation or transfer of competences (No 7) Other (potential) sources (No 2-5) Fees, patents and special contributions created within their jurisdiction; income from sales of goods and services; credits and loans; bequests, donations and similar

Table 4: Income of ETAs

7.3.3. Re-organising the Ministry of Autonomies

Some months after the promulgation of the Framework Law, the Ministry of Autonomies underwent restructuring. With Supreme Decree 802/2011, it was organised into a Vice-Ministry of Departmental and Municipal Autonomies and another Vice-Ministry of AIOC and territorial organisation, also in charge of regional autonomy. This new structure appears more functional for helping the newly

created and already existing entities to exercise their assigned competences and supporting the elaboration of autonomy statutes and organic charters¹⁶⁶.

While departmental and municipal levels are similar in proceedings, the AIOC has some specificities and the regional autonomy does not appear as a prominent figure. It appears therefore reasonable to divide the ministry in this way, with the bureaucrats, usually specialised in one area or the other, working in their field of expertise. With the LMAD and the restructured ministry, the government played a crucial role in steering the autonomy regime on its way to integration into the rules and enforcing mechanisms.

7.4. Three conflicting visions of autonomy in the pluri-national modality

7.4.1. Two different visions of autonomies inside the enforcing mechanisms

The reorganisation of the ministry also deepened division and furthered the separation of ideas of autonomy as deepened decentralisation and self-determination of peoples in the regime found in the CPE and LMAD. For a former Director of the AIOC,

there are different strands and visions [...] we experience this in the Ministry of Autonomies; there are people with a developmental vision, municipalista and occidental, and there is the indigenous autonomy, which are the weird creepy-crawly [bichos raros], who work on something else and propose decolonisation¹⁶⁷ (Interview 6).

The personnel working in the Vice-Ministry on the AIOC I encountered appeared highly dedicated to the peoples' self-determination and senior employees had experience working with indigenous people both from within and outside the state¹⁶⁸, in NGOs or similar. The same goes for personnel in the SIFDE, the entity in the Electoral Organ that supervises and accompanies some steps in the AIOC transition process (see 8.4.). Yet, these people perceive their position in the overall ministry and under the government as difficult. Keeping in mind that the other vice-ministry is concerned with over 300 municipalities and nine departments, it is not surprising that far more staff work on these than on the only regional autonomy and the few AIOC processes (see 8.4.2.).

The CPE also brought changes for the municipalities, which required adjustments in business as usual that had developed over the past years. For the Director of the Municipal Autonomies, who has like most of his senior colleagues accompanied the municipalities since the Law of Popular Participation, the municipalities face many challenges (Interview 11). With the CPE, the competence catalogue changed, the structure of council and mayor was reorganised and the council received legislative

¹⁶⁶ Since the municipalities were already autonomous, these did not need to elaborate statutes, closely entwined with the establishment of a new entity. The Organic Charter is to 'perfect' the exercise of the autonomy (Art. 61 III LMAD).

¹⁶⁷ La Paz, 04.04.2016.

¹⁶⁸ For example, in the Vice-Ministry of *Asuntos Indígenas y Pueblos Originarios* (VAIPO), created in the 1990s. It was abolished in pluri-national Bolivia, since the indigenous people should not be treated separately (Interview 5).

power. The municipalities are also encouraged to elaborate an Organic Charter to perfect their autonomy, which requires checking for constitutionality and approval in a referendum. In addition, the rural municipalities often continue to face severe capacity challenges, and the larger, quickly growing urban municipalities need to handle more people without receiving more resources¹⁶⁹.

For the Director of Municipal Autonomies, strengthening the municipalities would be even more important than the departmental or AIOC processes, since municipalities are closer to the people than the departments and unlike the AIOC not just concerned with some people (Interview 11). There is also limited willingness to grant the AIOC specificity and to acknowledge disappointment with the status quo. A state employee, mainly concerned with municipal and departmental autonomy asserts that

[t]hey are the state, too; they are an indigenous autonomy, but they are the state and they have to give the information [to the state], it is impossible that they receive money and you do not know what they did with it¹⁷⁰ (Interview 4).

For the Director of the above-mentioned SEA, the SEA would be mostly concerned with border and competence conflicts between different municipalities and/or departments – 'In fact, its entire life, the SEA has held a municipal-departmental vision'¹⁷¹ (Interview 4). In addition, in the fiscal pact negotiations in the CNA (see 7.5.3.), the AIOC was irrelevant.

When considering the whole central state autonomy regime, the AIOC appears like an annex that is granted some specificity. This suggests that instead of the demanded decolonisation of the state, the AIOC category is largely integrated with the modern/colonial framework of territorial state organisation serving to deepen decentralisation.

7.4.2. Government's main agenda: Autonomy as sovereignty of the *pueblo(s)*

Despite the MAS-IPSP government's efforts to concretise the autonomy regime resulting from the pact of 2009, it also pushed for a model of state, in which autonomy appears as national sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo(s)*, which resonate with the history and initial agenda of the MAS-IPSP (see 6.3.1.). In this, self-determination implies control of the *pueblo(s)* over the state and overcoming of dependency on other states and international organisations. I show throughout the next subsections, that that concern is reflected in the social-communitarian state model that underpins much of its policies and action and contradicts with autonomy as decentralisation and peoples' self-determination.

¹⁶⁹ Often people, who move to urban areas and spend most of their time there, remain registered in rural communities. This means that the co-participation from the Popular Participation Law continues to go to the rural municipalities.

¹⁷⁰ La Paz, 31.03.2016.

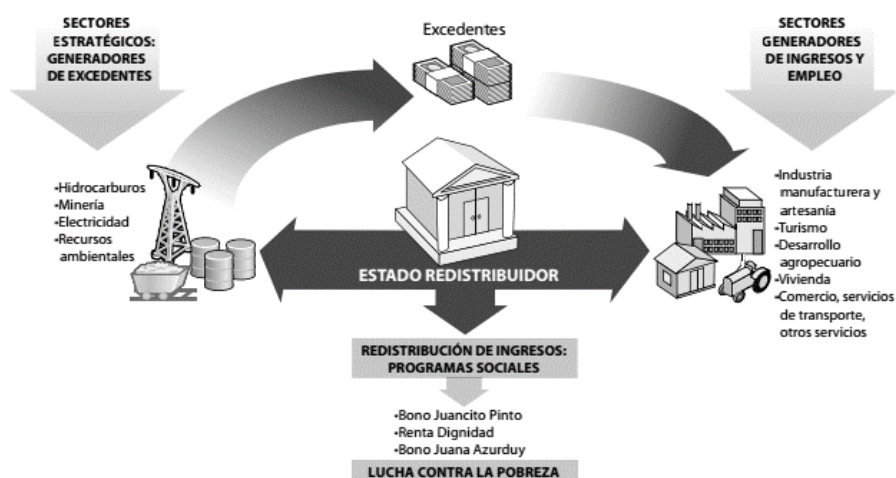
¹⁷¹ La Paz, 31.03.2016.

The origin and basic features of the model

The social-communitarian model employed goes back to the height of neoliberalism and the unfolding state crisis. The *comuna* members (see 3.4.) had been working on a desired transformation of state and society, focusing mainly on the sociological-political dimension, while another group of academics associated with the Socialist Party 1 (PS-1) known as *Grupo Duende* (Group 'Elves') was more concerned with the economic dimension. They worked on the notion of post-neoliberalism seeking to develop an economic model to overcome neoliberalism (Juárez Zeballos, 2010).

According to official sources, *comuna* member García Linera and the *Grupo Duende* realised that they shared the same objective (MEFP, 2011, p.6). This connection turned vital in the MAS-IPSP's government, as alongside García Linera, Luis Arce (Catacora), key member of the *Grupo Duende*, and the associate Carlos Villegas, became key figures. Arce and Villegas are known as key ideologists of the first National Development Plan (PND, 2007) which was to become highly influential for future development plans and government strategies. Arce was appointed minister of economy and public finances in 2006 and was when he stepped down in June 2017 due to health reasons (La Razón, 2017a), the only minister still remaining in his position. Villegas served as minister of development planning (2006-2007) and minister of hydrocarbons (2007-2008) and in 2009, he became president of the State's hydrocarbon company, YPFB¹⁷² (Los Tiempos, 2017b).

The so-called 'economic-social-communitarian-productive model' is perceived as a response to and a break away from the neoliberal multicultural modality. As a transitory stage towards socialism, it should gradually resolve many social problems and consolidate the economic base for an adequate distribution of the economic surplus (Arce Catacora, 2011, p.4). In this process, the state is key, as illustrated in the following graphic:



Graphic 1: The economic-social-communitarian-productive model (Arce Catacora, 2011, p.7)

¹⁷² He remained in this position until his death in early 2015.

In this model, the state acts as redistributive agent, transferring resources from the strategic sectors, fundamentally hydrocarbons, mining and electricity, which generate a surplus to those sectors that produce income and jobs (Arce Catacora, 2015, p.203). Nevertheless, the state still needs to increase its revenues from the strategic sectors in comparison to the neoliberal model, which happened in Bolivia with the so-called nationalisation of hydrocarbons in 2005 (see 6.2.1.). This is a particularly attractive strategy for times of rising or high world market prices and a high demand for natural resources as in most of first decade of the 21st century.

The government's objective to turn Bolivia into the 'energetic heart of South America' as a key part of this plan has become even more crucial. Previously forecast in the first National Development Plan, in 2010 and 2012, strategic parts of the electric sectors were 'renationalised' which helped to control the Bolivian electric sector (de Castro and Franco França, 2012). This allowed the government to push more directly for the development of different sources of energy. In 2015, the ministry published the strategy document, which includes a list of 47 projects for electricity generation, carried out by the state-owned Electricity Corporation ENDE and costing over 27.000 million USD, with plants starting operation between 2015 and 2025 (Ministerio de Hidrocarburos y Energía, 2017, p.5).

With this strategy, Bolivia should slowly overcome dependency on strategic sectors and move away from exporting primary goods and become an industrialised and productive country (Interview 104). The state also actively redistributes income and implements social policies to combat poverty, exclusion and marginalisation (Arce Catacora, 2015, p.203).

The following sketch from the Ministry of Development Planning gives an idea of the envisioned public management in the social-communitarian state model:



Graphic 2: Public management in the social-communitarian state model (MPD, 2010, p.6)

The new state is visualised as breaking with the colonial and neoliberal state that regulates in a top-down manner. In the new state, the state promotes and acts as development protagonist, while social

power also plays a key role in development. Thus, sovereignty is restored, not only in the international realm, as stressed in the economic model, but also as envisioned here rooted in, and based on, the people.

The aim of this social-communitarian state is the Living Well (*Vivir Bien*) of all Bolivians, which the president explains as follows: '*Vivir Bien* is living in equality and in justice. Where there are neither exploited nor exploiters (...) *Vivir Bien* is not the same as Living Better (*Vivir Mejor*) (...) than the other' (cited by Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2013, p.9, author's translation). *Vivir Bien* has turned into a buzzword, found in strategy documents, including Development and Government Plans. Also the above-mentioned energy strategy runs under the banner 'Energy for the Living Well' (Ministerio de Hidrocarburos y Energía, 2017). Yet, Huanacuni Mamani – who recently became foreign minister – points out that the government picks up this concept that stems from the ancestral indigenous peoples' cosmology for itself and distorts it (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010, p.20). It is mistaken that the original *Vivir Bien* could be developed by the state since it is built from the community (Solón, 2016, p.56).

This model does not incorporate a break from conventional ideas of how a modern/colonial state is organised and operates, which is required for a *different* state. However, it indicates a break with the neoliberal multicultural modality that is closer to the 'neo-developmental state' (see 2.3.) than to the imagined pluri-national state and also decentralisation is not on the agenda. This is illustrated in Arce's 425-page book from 2015: While he explains and evaluates the model in great detail, not a single section is dedicated to autonomies, peoples' self-determination, decentralisation, or similar.

The government's strategy documents

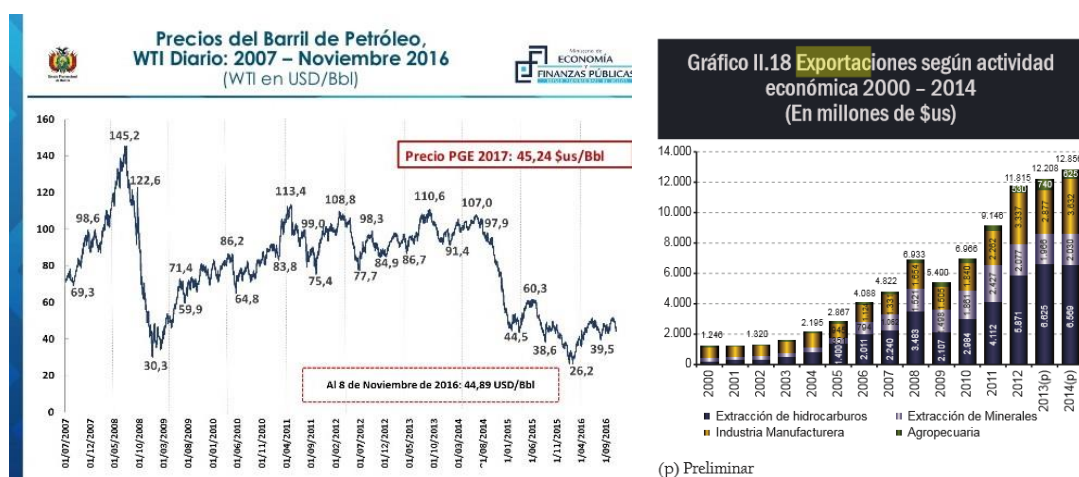
The limited space of other autonomies in this model of state is reflected in crucial government strategy documents. As stated earlier, the 2010-2015 Government Plan (MAS-IPSP, 2009), dedicated a section to 'autonomy really for all'. In turn, the 2013 strategy 'Patriotic Agenda 2025' mentions 'autonom...' three times, 'autonomía' not at all (Gobierno de Bolivia, 2013). In turn, 'soberan...' as key term in the model of state above, appears 32 times on 12 pages and in the heading of ten out of 13 pillars of the agenda. In the 85-pages 2015-2020 Government Plan, 'autonomía' is found four times, with no further words starting with 'autonom...' (MAS-IPSP, 2014). 'Soberan...' appears 46 times.

In the recent 2016-2020 National Development Plan (Gobierno de Bolivia, 2016) 'autonomía', which shares the key pillars with the Patriotic Agenda 2025, is mentioned nine times on the 216 pages, while 'soberan...' appears 69 times. However, 79 words start with 'autonom...', which is to be seen in the light of the declaration that the autonomy regime has been consolidated (Gobierno de Bolivia, 2016,

p.186). Therefore, the plan mentions the autonomous entities as already established and functioning entities – in Chapter 8, I show that this is a misleading statement.

7.5. Subordinating other autonomies to the social-communitarian model of state

In this section, I show how the government has increasingly subordinated the other two visions of autonomy – autonomy as deepened decentralisation and self-determination of peoples – to the social-communitarian state beyond strategic documents. This process started as early as 2011, but has accelerated and become more apparent since 2013/14. The more open post-2013 approach is to be seen against the background of the changes in the world market, strongly reflected in the Bolivian economy. Since the collapse of the world market in 2008, the prices for raw materials have appeared to grow steadily. Yet, as the following graphs show, the prices of petrol have dropped dramatically since 2014 (Graph 3), which has strongly affected the Bolivian economy, given the relevance of hydrocarbon in the total exports (Graph 4):



Graphics 3 and 4: Petrol prices and composition of exports (Left: MEFP (2017b, p.5); Right: MEFP (2015, p.75))

In this scenario, the state is more constrained in responding to internal demands, since, seeking to sustain growth, it needs to mediate those external pressures.

In the following, I consider how the space for autonomy beyond the self-determination of the *pueblo*, became smaller, looking at the enforcing mechanisms, rules and government practices. This also shows how the government influences these other two components.

7.5.1. Enforcing mechanisms: Weakening the ministry and other central state entities

The decreasing emphasis on autonomies in the documents was paralleled by personnel changes in the government. In mid-2011, Romero was appointed minister of the presidency¹⁷³ and Claudia Peña, former vice-minister of autonomies, became new minister (Presidential Decree 906/2011). The

¹⁷³ He remained a key figure in Morales cabinets, serving since 2012 as minister of the government, with a short interruption of running for senate and serving as senator in 2014/15.

cruceña is associated with the grouping '*Santa Cruz Somos Todos*', an ally of the MAS-IPSP (Ministerio de Autonomías, 2011). Shortly after the 2014 national election, Hugo Siles (Núñez del Prado) was appointed as minister of autonomy (Presidential Decree 2249/2015). Siles had served as municipal councillor in Santa Cruz. Like Peña, he does not have a background closely entwined with the struggles for autonomy described in the last chapter.

Peña and Siles were described by observers and ministry employees as politically much weaker than Romero (Interviews 44,70,103). After leaving her position, Peña retired from politics according to herself¹⁷⁴. According to informants, the MAS-IPSP had put her into a difficult situation but expected her to reconcile dynamics that seemed impossible to reconcile. She is one of 13 out of a total number of 106 former MAS-IPSP ministers, who no longer occupy an official post (El Deber, 2017).

The budget data might also indicate a weakening emphasis on the matter at the central state level. The following table¹⁷⁵ demonstrates that the overall exercised budget has dropped and the share of the ministry's budget in the total budget of all ministries has fallen.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Exercised budget (in Mio. BOB)	52.2	41.3	56.7	40.3	31.0	34.4
% of budget exercised for all ministries, including the vice-presidency	0.6%	0.42%	0.5%	0.27%	0.19%	0.19 %
Budget compared to other ministries	5 th last	5 th last	4 th last	4 th last	Last	2 nd last

Table 5: Budget of the Ministry of Autonomies (2010-2015), data from SEA (2016)

Furthermore, while in 2010-2013 three or four other ministries exercised a smaller budget, in 2014 and 2015, it was none or one.

In early 2017, Morales reshuffled his cabinet (DS 3058/2017; 3059/2017). With this, the Ministry of Autonomies was degraded to a vice-ministry within the Ministry of the Presidency, which also meant that it returned under Romero's control, who is now perceived as one of the closest confidants of Morales and García Linera. Simultaneously, a Ministry of Energy was established and Morales claimed that 'this ministry (...) will be the hope and economic future of our beloved Bolivia' (cited by La Razón, 2017b, author's translation), which resonates with the above-mentioned social-communitarian model.

¹⁷⁴ During fieldwork, I visited her café and she was unwilling to give me an interview, pointing out that she did not want to talk and think about this experience. This reaction had been anticipated by some local informants.

¹⁷⁵ In this section and the following sections, I use government data, which is often the only available data. Yet, it should be treated with caution since I found inconsistencies in the annual reports and it is not stated, whether BOB are the total or controlled by inflation, which is why it appears important to also look at the percentages and treat timelines with caution.

Additionally, the SEA remains small, given its task of assisting the ETAs and the central state in the development of the autonomies. It can be consulted by all of the approximately 350 ETAs and the central state in case of border conflicts, conflicts over competences and similar. During fieldwork, the SEA had 38 employees, which was considered by the then Director as insufficient, given the workload (Interview 4). Furthermore, the CNA had arguably also not been used by the government as prescribed in the LMAD (see 7.5.3.).

7.5.2. Rules: Limiting autonomy and enhancing control

Since the MAS-IPSP has two thirds in both chambers of the Pluri-national Assembly and controls its members tightly, rule-making in Pluri-national Bolivia largely happens in the government's interest. In this section, I include laws and also some related decrees, which do not belong to the 'rules' component of the central state in a strict sense.

Limiting the scope for self-determination of peoples further

Some months after the LMAD, the Law of Judicial Demarcation 073/2010 was instituted, which defines which legal matters are handled by the 'indigenous-original-peasant' (IOC) and ordinary jurisdiction. With this law, the content of which was key part of the pact in congress (see 6.3.4.), IOC jurisdiction is reduced to matters that are solely of local relevance and can only be applied to members of the community. Article 10 II excludes other matters. An indigenous authority from Salinas complained that 'before our justice system was more complete, with the Law on Judicial Demarcation they have taken away many competences'¹⁷⁶ (Interview 88).

The Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well 300/2012, which recognises nature as bearer of rights, also known as *Pachamama* Law received international attention. Yet, critics often perceive it as no more than a 'nice poem' and not a proper law, since it lacks enforcement mechanisms (Interview 21). In the context of falling raw material prices in the world market, the government has increasingly pushed for more exploration for reserves. During the boom years, new reserves were hardly tapped and those that were will run out in some time (Gandarillas Gonzales, 2014, Interview 7).

Two decrees from the first half of 2015, are, in this context, crucial for indigenous peoples' autonomy. Firstly, in March, Supreme Decree 2298/2015 sought to accelerate the constitutionally-guaranteed prior consultation processes by limiting the consultation period to a maximum of 45 days (Art. 2 II). If the process cannot be concluded in this time, it can be prescinded from it and further continued with an Administrative Resolution (Art. 3 III). Not only does this limit the rights of peoples generally, it also

¹⁷⁶ Salinas, 22.04.2016.

constrains the exclusive competence of development and exercise of mechanisms of prior consultation, given to the AIOC ETAs. Secondly, two months later with Supreme Decree 2366/2015, protected areas were opened for exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves. Eleven of the 22 protected areas are directly affected by the present hydrocarbon frontier (Campanini, 2015). But even without this Decree, while in 2006, 1.2 million hectares of protected areas were committed to hydrocarbons and 285,000 mining, in 2014, there were over three million hectares to hydrocarbons and 305,000 to mining (Gandarillas Gonzales, 2014, p.128). This increase has consequences for people inhabiting these areas; in particular, lowland people are affected and internal conflicts and corruption and/or co-optation of (some) leaders does not facilitate resistance (Interview 5).

In August 2017, the Law for building the controversial TIPNIS highway was passed. In this context, Morales claimed that '[t]his so-called colonial environmentalism is not interested in the indigenous movement having schools, hospitals; they are not interested in the indigenous movement having electricity or that we have highways' (cited by Collyns, 2017). Some days later, García Linera even claimed that the protected areas had been an invention of the *gringos* (Página Siete, 2017). All this is in stark contrast to idea of peoples' self-determination.

Taking resources from the ETAs

The controversial Law 767/2015 also goes against the idea of autonomy, yet more against autonomy as decentralisation, since it further restricted the ETAs' resources. With the objective of promoting investments in exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons (Art. 1), the law establishes a fund that serves to attract investors. This fund is composed of 12 per cent of the IDH (see 7.3.2.) before the distribution to municipal and departmental ETAs and universities takes place (Art. 12 I). This led to criticism since the resources destined for the ETAs are now used to pay for a privative competence of the central state (Interview 38).

Enhancing control over the ETAs through integral planning

In the LMAD, integral development (Art. 7 II 2 LMAD) and integral planning (Art. 93 I 2 LMAD) are already conspicuously mentioned and the integral state planning system is seen as a key mechanism for the cooperation between central state and the ETAs (Art. 120, 130, 131 LMAD). Also the 2010-2015 government plan states that 'we should accelerate the autonomous process in the country (...) which guarantees national unity and sustainable integral development in each region and the country' (MAS-IPSP, 2009, pp.73-74, author's translation). The above-mentioned 'Patriotic Agenda' (Gobierno de Bolivia, 2013) emphasises integral development and the latest national development plan is entitled 'Plan of Economic and Social Development in the Framework of Integral Development for

Living Well' (Gobierno de Bolivia, 2016). The 2015-2020 Government Plan (MAS-IPSP, 2014) speaks of marching towards the integral state (ibid., p.24).

In early 2016, the government enacted the much-awaited Integral State Planning System Law 777/2016 (SPIE). With this, integral planning is concretised as a hinge between the social-communitarian state model and the autonomy regime. As in the case of the LMAD, it passed the Pluri-national Assembly rather smoothly, given the large majority of the MAS-IPSP. For the Vice-Ministry of Planning and Coordination, it was a necessary law since the previous legislation was designed for a neoliberal state (Viceministerio de Planificación y Coordinación, 2016, p.2). The SPIE framework seeks to ensure that all actions of the public administration are oriented towards 'Living Well', needed to fulfil the National Development Plan and Patriotic Agenda (ibid., p.3). It should serve to ensure the coordination between different government entities and facilitate integral long-, medium- and short-term planning.

Following the SPIE, besides the annual operational plans approved by the highest executive authority of the corresponding entity (Art. 23 SPIE), the departmental, regional and municipal ETAs must elaborate a five-year 'Territorial Plan of Integral Development for Living Well' (PTDI). On one side, this must accord with the five-year National Development Plan (PDES), which is elaborated by government and approved by the Pluri-national Assembly in the first year of the electoral term (Art. 15 III SPIE). On the other side, it has to be coordinated with the 'Sectorial Plans of Integral Development for Living Well' (PSDI), explained, coordinated and submitted by the relevant ministry, checked by the governing body of the SPIE, in the Ministry of Development Planning (Art. 16 IV SPIE).

The PTDI must be formulated within 180 days after the approval of the national PDES (Art. 17 V No 1 SPIE), which does not respect the subnational electoral calendar and clearly indicates the subordination of the autonomous entities to the central level. Like the PSDI, the PTDI is also checked by the governing body of the SPIE (Art. 17 V No 2-5 SPIE) and if the plan is not adjusted following the check, the governing body informs the comptroller (Art. 17 IX SPIE). The autonomous departmental, regional and municipal governments monitor and evaluate the implementation of their plan, working closely with the Subsystem of Integral Monitoring and Evaluation of Plans, in coordination with the governing body of SPIE (Art. 17 V No 7 SPIE). Further reports and evaluations are prescribed (Art. 17 V No 8 SPIE).

The AIOC must submit a 'Plan of Territorial Communitarian Management for Living Well' (PGTC). As in the case of the other ETAs, these must be elaborated in line with the PDES and coordinated with the other subnational and sectorial plans (Art. 18 III No 1 SPIE). This plan must follow the following structure: 1. Horizon/Vision of the IOC nation or *pueblo*, 2. Assessment of the situation of the IOC

nation or *pueblo*, 3. Policies and strategic outline concerning communitarian economy and production and territorial management, among others, 4. Plan of results and actions and 5. Five-year total budget (Art. 18 II No 2 SPIE).

The elaboration takes place in a participatory way, following their own rules and procedures, yet still within 180 days after the PDES has been approved (Art. 18 III No 2 SPIE). Also here, the compatibility of the plan with the PDES and the competences assigned to the AIOC is evaluated at the central state level (Art. 18 III No 3 SPIE). The highest AIOC authority is responsible for making the adjustments (Art. 18 III No 4 SPIE). As in the cases of the other subnational plans, if the plan is not adjusted, the governing body of the SPIE informs the comptroller (Art. 18 IV SPIE) and reports and evaluations are prescribed (Art. 18 III No 7 SPIE).

This legislation is sometimes perceived as more centralising than the 1990s-legislation associated with the 2nd wave of neoliberal reforms (Interview 99). The government defines the role of the state as promoter and protagonist of development and decides what integral planning is. The autonomous entities develop their plans after and in accordance with the national plan and require approval from the central state level. Critics perceive it a top-down process, which opposes autonomy as a deepened decentralisation: 'What kind of autonomy do we have if the central government approves all our plans?', a departmental assembly member from Santa Cruz asked (Interview 34).

The SPIE even more strongly contradicts the idea of peoples' self-determination. While the indigenous communities have long experience in self-management, written rules and procedures for administrating their public life are not found in most highland, valley and lowland communities (Interview 1). Instead, collective decision-making and the context-specific application of values and principles are emphasised, which is far more unbureaucratic and flexible than the procedure laid out in the SPIE. It does not come as a surprise that some indigenous authorities from municipalities that entered the AIOC transition are severely disappointed or even intimidated by this law (see 8.4.)

7.5.3. Government' practices in tension with constitutionally established autonomies

After having focused on enforcing mechanisms and rules, which are heavily influenced by the government, I now look at (further) government practices. In the regime set up in the CPE, autonomy has three aspects: Election of authorities, competences and resources (Art. 272 CPE). In what follows, I show how government actions are in conflict with and partly oppose these principles and how this has attracted criticism and led to conflicts.

Lack of respect of directly-elected local and regional authorities?

The controversial Article 144 LMAD presented the opportunity for suspending elected authorities based on a formal accusation. This was initiated by the governing party and led to the replacement of

Tarija's elected Governor Cossío and Beni's elected Governor Suárez with interim governors from the MAS-IPSP – with this, only Santa Cruz' Governor Costas was left from the four¹⁷⁷ *media luna* opposition prefects/governors¹⁷⁸ (see Table 8). Also a considerable number of local authorities were suspended based on this norm (Interviews 24,29). In 2012, the Pluri-national Constitutional Court (TCP) declared Article 144 LMAD as unconstitutional, which can be seen as a 'tentative early indication of a certain independence of the judiciary' (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016, p.8).

Yet, it is questionable how far this prevented similar, less formal practices. For those in opposition, the MAS-IPSP also used this possibility of Article 144 to threaten oppositional authorities, seeking to subjugate them (Interview 20). During fieldwork, I came across cases where local authorities were said to be compliant with the MAS-IPSP, knowing that otherwise they would be threatened with, for example, trials for tax reasons (Interview 74). If used like this, such practices contravene the autonomy regime, as it does not respect elected local and regional authorities.

Getting involved in ETAs competences through government programmes

In the social-communitarian state, redistribution through social policies is a key task of the state. As shown in Graphic 1, three larger cash transfer programmes are crucial: the 2006 '*Bono Juancito Pinto*'¹⁷⁹ for school children, the 2007 'Dignity Pension' for all elderly people¹⁸⁰ and the 2009 '*Bono Juana Azurduy*'¹⁸¹ for mothers. In December 2015, almost half of the Bolivian population had received a transfer through one of these three programmes (MEFP, 2016, p.57). In addition, smaller programmes exist, like the bonus for the best final year student of each educational institution (DS 1887/2014).

Also through other programmes, involving specific projects, the government shows its presence in the entire country. With the 2006 'Programme of Social and Solidarity Housing', the government has directly engaged in the construction of social housing. According to a 2015 report, over 50.000 houses were built with a total budget of 1491 million BOB¹⁸² (PIEB, 2015). The programme '*Mi Agua*' ('My Water') (DS 831/2011), aims at improving water provision for consumption and irrigation and seeks to reduce poverty and improve agricultural productivity (MEFP, 2015, p.193). Until late 2016, 3177 million BOB¹⁸³ had been invested in 335 out of the total 339 municipalities (Manzaneda, 2016). In the

¹⁷⁷ Pando's Prefect had been arrested after the 'Pando Massacre' in 2008 (see 6.3.4.).

¹⁷⁸ With the CPE, the prefectures were replaced by the *gubernaciones* and so the former prefect was then the governor.

¹⁷⁹ It was established with Supreme Decree 28899/2009.

¹⁸⁰ This programme was not an invention of the MAS: It was introduced under Sánchez de Lozada in the 1990s, but was disbursed only once and the next president abolished it (Mesa Gisbert, 2003c, p.766). In his second Presidency, 'Goni' re-established it with Law 2427/2002 as BONOSOL (*Bono Solidario*). With the dignity pension (Law 3791/2007), the access age was lowered from 65 to 60 and the amount increased from around annually 225 to around 300 USD (ibid., p.779).

¹⁸¹ It was created with Supreme Decree 0066/2009.

¹⁸² Approximately £160 mio (August 2017).

¹⁸³ Approximately £350 mio (August 2017).

first phase of the more recent '*Mi Riego*' ('My Irrigation'), 128 million BOB¹⁸⁴ were invested in 158 projects in 322 municipalities (ibid.).

Critics point out that projects are neither allocated transparently nor according to need, but motivated by political concerns. For example, with regards to social housing, local researchers found that the projects were not focused on areas of poor quality of housing or high population growth (PIEB, 2015). Since president and vice-president show their faces at numerous inaugurations and similar events, the perceived populist orchestration of the programmes has attracted criticism. Having said this, these projects are often important measures of 'palliative care' (Manzaneda, 2016) and the government appears to largely operate in the competence framework established in CPE and LMAD.

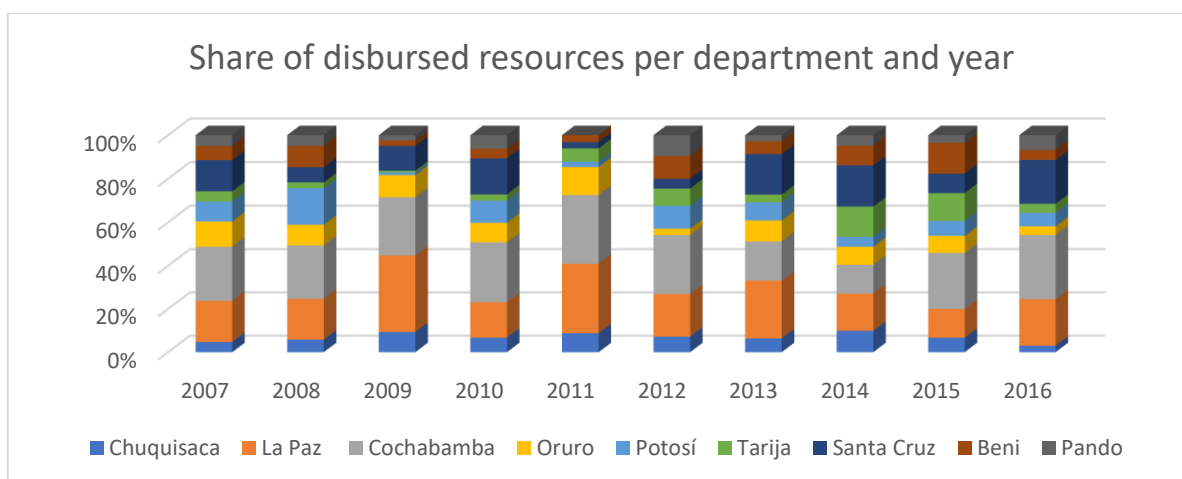
In the following, I examine the programme '*Bolivia Cambia, Evo Cumple*' ('Bolivia changes, Evo fulfils'), which is larger than the aforementioned ones and illustrates well the tensions between the social-communitarian state and other autonomy visions. With '*Evo Cumple*', resources are sent to municipalities and communities for carrying out projects in an array of sectors (MEFP, 2012, p.140). It was initially funded by the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) but since July 2011, the National Treasury pays for it (DS 913/2011).

According to government data, a total number of 5,432 projects were carried out between 2007 and 2013 (MEFP, 2015). If these had been distributed evenly across municipalities, approximately 16 projects would have been carried out in each municipality in these eight years. In the 2007-2016 period, education and sports have been the most prominent sectors with 40 and 27 per cent of disbursed resources respectively (MEFP, 2017a). In comparison, only 10 per cent were invested in the productive sector and six per cent in health (ibid.). In recent years, the investment in productive infrastructure has increased (ibid.), depicted by critics as buildings for government-friendly unions or similar.

Since early on, critical voices have pointed to the lack of transparency in how projects are assigned and carried out – Evo would decide it all (Interview 25). According to the government, decisions on projects are made after a technical evaluation (MEFP, 2012, p.140). Yet, these documents are not accessible and critics consider these as vanity projects and as not targeting those in need (Interviews 23,38).

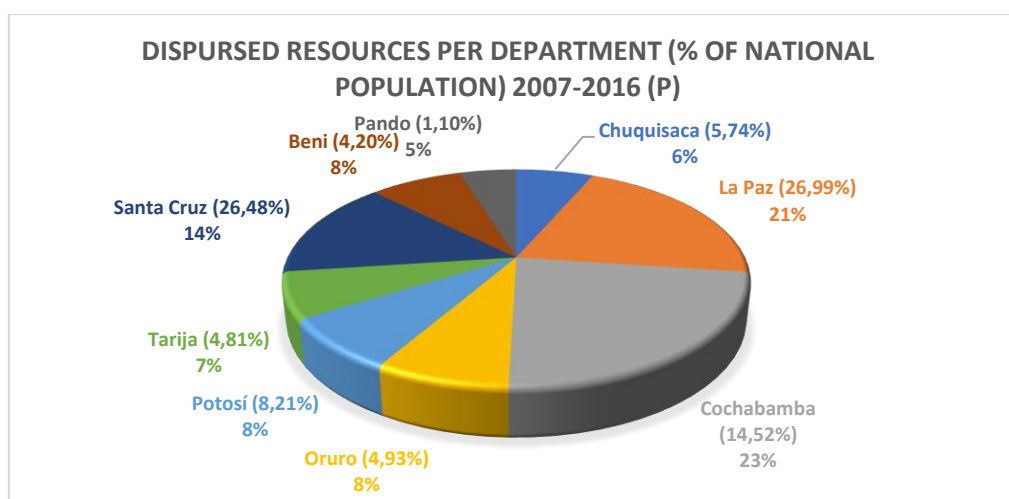
The following graph shows that investments were concentrated in the three most populated departments: La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, with Santa Cruz receiving a considerably larger share since 2013:

¹⁸⁴ Approximately £14 mio (August 2017).



Graphic 5: 'Evo Cumple' – resources per department and year (2007-2016); data from MEFP (2017a)

The next chart compares the investment ratios to the population ratios and it becomes clear that Cochabamba and to a lesser extent, La Paz – the strongholds of the MAS-IPSP and strong in population – benefitted far more than Santa Cruz.



Graphic 6: 'Evo Cumple' – resources per department (% of national population) (2007-2016); data from MEFP (2017a) and CEDIB (2013)

While Cochabamba accounts for slightly less than 15 per cent of the population, it received 23 per cent of 'Evo Cumple' resources, while Santa Cruz, inhabited by over 25 per cent of the national population, only received 14 per cent of investments. It also does not seem that departments with higher poverty rates are targeted systematically over richer department. For example, Potosí, with the highest poverty rate of 81 per cent (PIEB, 2014) and inhabited by slightly over eight per cent of the population (CEDIB, 2013), has only received eight per cent of the resources. More detailed datasets could not be found, for example, projects distribution in departments. In conversation and interviews, I heard that in the Chapare – base of the *cocalero* movement – investments have been particularly strong (Interview 3). When I travelled through the region, I saw more 'Evo Cumple' *plazas*, stadiums and schools than in other parts of Bolivia I visited.

Looking at the budget, it becomes apparent that the amount and share in the overall budget has generally increased, also since the overall state budget shrunk in 2014/5:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 (p)
Total (in mio BOB)	99	71	46	91	11	88	754	825	752	2109
% of total exercised budget	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.6%	0.25%	0.5%	1.2%	1.2%	1.4%	n/a

Table 6: 'Evo Cumple' – resources as share of budget; 'Evo Cumple' data from MEFP (2017a), budget data from SEA (2016)

For the 2017 budget, 1341 million BOB¹⁸⁵ were assigned to 'Evo Cumple', which led to controversial discussions. Considering the decreased overall budget and the shrinking royalties and transfers to departments and municipalities, the approved amount was considered by some as unreasonably high. Yet, Minister Arce defended the plans by pointing to the importance of economic stability and resolve in the execution of public investment, which would be vital for economic growth (El Diario, 2016).

'Evo Cumple' is in tension with autonomy as self-determination of peoples and as decentralisation since the central state is embroiled at different state levels. While the government would in fact only breach the competence regime established in CPE and LMAD in few cases (Interviews 29,40), 'Evo Cumple' often disrupts local planning if not properly coordinated (Interview 80). An employee of a local foundation recalled the case of a bridge in El Alto, in which the government did not even consult the municipality to ask, for example, how many lanes it should have (Interview 3). More generally, 'Evo Cumple' is often considered a regression from the 1994 Public Participation Law (see 6.2.1.) (Interviews 20,99,103). Now, 'Evo says here and there, no planning'¹⁸⁶, which leads to begging and the president would seem like a mayor whenever he wants wherever he wants (Interviews 8,62,80) - 'Who needs all these pitches? Well, they are now national priority because Evo said so' (Interview 21). With 'Evo Cumple', the government tried to alleviate the pain somewhat, but it could not give the cities a motor so they would start their own lives (Interview 73).

Another key criticism revolves around supposedly poor project supervision and quality of materials used, leading to deficient results (Los Tiempos, 2017a). For a former opposition senator it is clear that if they wanted to do this and not let the municipalities or departments do it, they should at least do it properly – but they would not be interested in leaving more than their names (Interview 35). Like the aforementioned programmes, the president himself or the vice-president would turn up at the inauguration ceremonies and celebrate, then just leave care for what happened after. For the

¹⁸⁵ Approximately £145 mio (August 2017).

¹⁸⁶ Oruro, 14.04.2016.

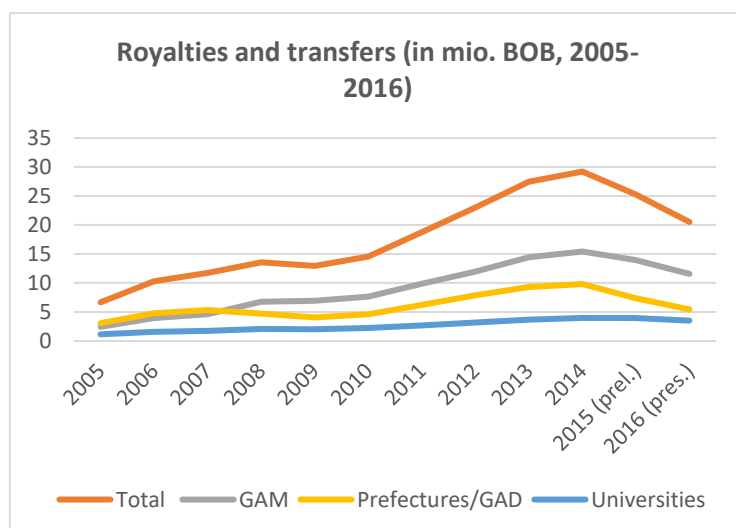
president of a departmental civic committee, the government would de-concentrate problems, but centralise money to appear like a type of Santa Claus, who makes and resolves it all¹⁸⁷ (Interview 101).

The question of internal distribution: The fiscal pact

Resources are next to elected authorities and competences, the third key aspect of established autonomy regime. Without resources, ETAs are severely limited and competences cannot be exercised properly. Hence, in what follows, the question of resource distribution inside Bolivia is addressed.

Background I: Decreasing royalties and transfers for the ETAs

As became apparent earlier, increasing limitation of the state-recognised autonomies as self-determination of peoples and deepened decentralisation paralleled the changing dynamics at the world market (see 7.5.1.). For the ETAs, this has – as visible in the following graph – resulted in decreasing royalties and transfers, which are largely due to shrinking prices, yet also result from the above-mentioned legal measures.



Graphic 7: Royalties and transfers (2005-2016); data 2005-2015: MEFP (2016, p.306) (2015 preliminary); 2016 data (estimated) from Fundación Jubileo (2016, p.6)

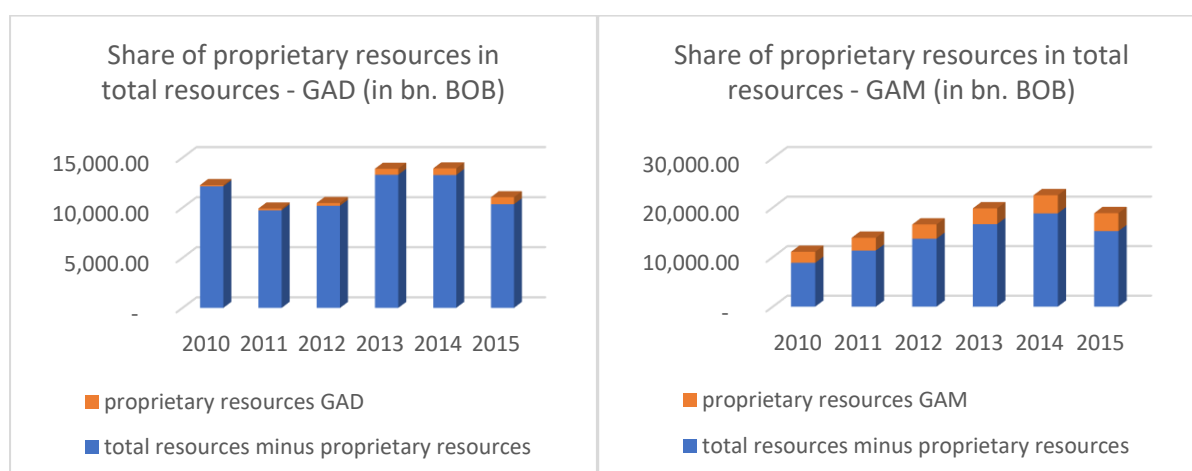
Apart from the recent decline, this graph also indicates that the distribution between autonomous municipal governments (GAM) and prefectures/autonomous departmental governments (GAD) has undergone change. With Supreme Decree 29322/2007, the government altered the distribution of the IDH beyond the central state (see 6.3.3., 7.3.2.). While in 2005, 36.63 per cent went to the GAMs and 46.11 to the GADs, since 2009, the GAMs receive more than 50 per cent, while the GADs' share fell to under 30 per cent in 2015 (MEFP, 2016, p.306). In practice, in Cochabamba, La Paz, Oruro and Santa Cruz, the municipalities of the departmental capitals have in the past year exercised larger budgets than the whole departmental ETAs (SEA, 2016).

¹⁸⁷ Cochabamba, 31.05.2016.

Background II: Proprietary resources

With shrinking resources, it becomes even more important, how the remaining resources are spent. In this, the *gobernaciones* and municipalities continue to provide 30 per cent of their IDH share to the Dignity Pension, as the MAS-IPSP ruled in 2007 (see 6.3.3.). In late 2015, the above-mentioned controversial Law 767/2015 was passed, which further restricted the available resources.

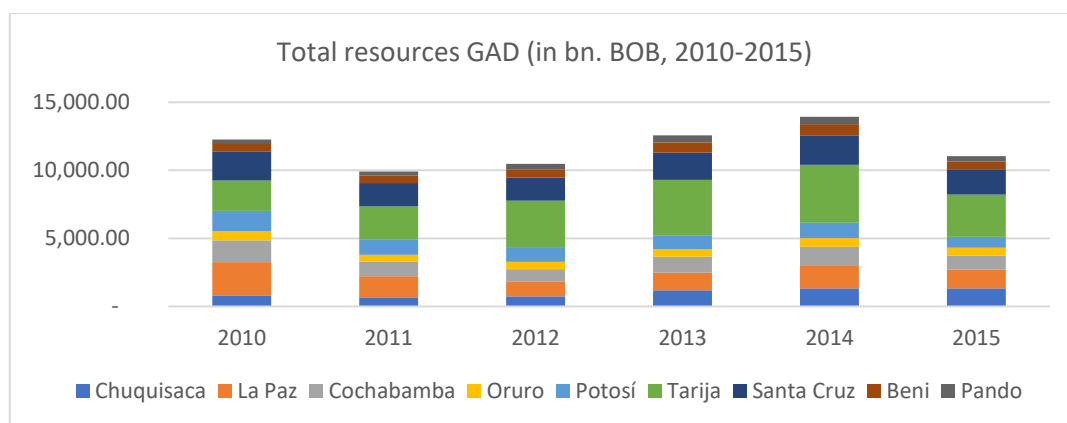
As mentioned above, the CPE and LMAD give ETAs the exclusive competence to create taxes, charges and special contributions within their jurisdiction, among others (see Table 4) and it is unregulated how these are to be spent. However, Article 323 IV CPE mentions important limitations and prohibits the imposition of taxes that are analogous to existing taxes (No 1). Law 154/2011 on classification and definition of taxes restricts this further (Interview 12). In Bolivia, the taxes related to economic activities are paid to the central state level and the municipalities collect taxes for housing and automobiles and similar (Interview 23). The municipalities also have income from already existing patents (Interview 21). This means there is little left for the departmental ETAs to tax considering their reluctance to attract anger from the population (Interviews 3,24,38). The following graphs show that proprietary resources have slightly increased for the GAD and GAM between 2010 and 2015, but still constitute a small share of the total resources with the GAM generating more resources than the GAD:



Graphics 8 and 9: Share of proprietary resources in total resources – GAD and GAM (SEA, 2016)

Background III: Distribution among ETAs and between central state and ETAs

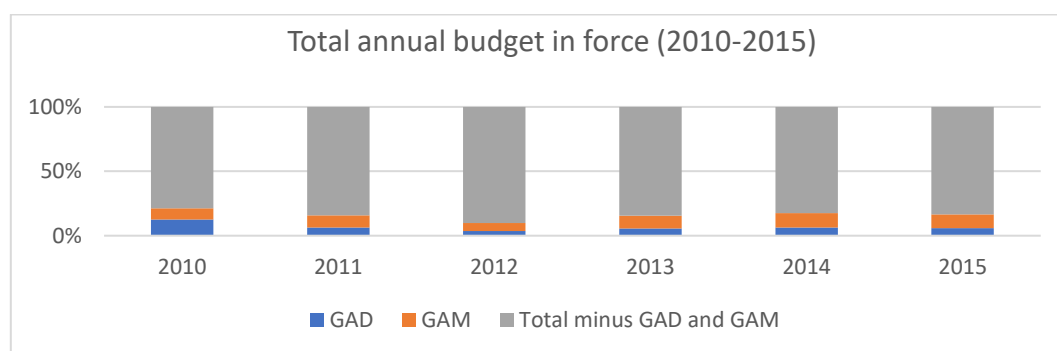
In addition to shrinking resources at the general level, distribution of resources remains highly uneven across Bolivia. Given the importance of royalties and transfers in the budget, mostly the hydrocarbon producing departments and municipalities have received more resources than others. In particular Tarija, with less than five per cent of the population and the second lowest poverty rate in Bolivia in 2011 (PIEB, 2014), has benefited exceptionally, while departments with far more inhabitants benefited less:



Graphic 10: Total resources GAD (2010-2015) (SEA, 2016)

The 2012 census data also indicates migration towards the valleys and lowlands, since the population has increased far more in the lowlands and Cochabamba than in the highlands¹⁸⁸ (CEDIB, 2013; Montero, 2013). This can be seen as legitimising the demand for redistribution from the former *media luna* departments for renegotiating internal redistribution.

Key point of attack in the demands for more redistribution is the central state. As apparent in the following graph, between 2010 and 2015, less than 20 per cent of the current budget was allocated to the ETAs:



Graphic 11: Total annual budget in force (2010-2015) (SEA, 2016)

Following the estimation of the cruceño GAD Santa Cruz, when considering the above-mentioned Dignity Pension and recent the investor fund, the central government effectively controls around 88 per cent of the total budget (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-e, p.17).

The fiscal pact I: Delayed beginning

With shrinking resources and uneven distribution, a fiscal pact on the generation, distribution and spending of public resources has in the past years turned into a key area of conflict between central government and some, mostly oppositional regional authorities. In this, the government has shown

¹⁸⁸ When comparing the data from 2001 and 2012 census, the Bolivian population has increased by 25.5 per cent or 2,115,588 people (CEDIB, 2013). Pando (107 per cent; +56,648), Santa Cruz (37 per cent; +746,773), Cochabamba (33 per cent; +482,690) and Tarija (30 per cent; +117,531) are above the average. Oruro (25 per cent), La Paz (17 per cent), Beni (17 per cent), Potosí (13 per cent) and Chuquisaca (13 per cent) grew below average.

no interest in deepening autonomy, understood as profound decentralisation. Autonomy as self-determination of peoples has not been on the agenda.

In the 7th Transitory Regulation of the LMAD, it states that within no more than six months after the publication of official census results, a technical proposal for a new fiscal pact is to be presented to the National Autonomy Council (CNA, see 7.3.2.) to start negotiations. This proposal is elaborated by the State Services of Autonomies (SEA, see 7.3.2.) in coordination with the Ministry of Autonomies and the MEFP. The president of the CNA, that is the president of the state, convenes the session (Art. 124 I LMAD).

The last census was published on the 30th of July 2013 (DS 1672/2013). Hence, the six months' period ended on the 31st of January 2014. Yet, the first session of the CNA took place on the 11th of February 2015 (CNA, n.d.). It was the first time the CNA met, despite the 2010 LMAD stating that it has two annual meetings. In early 2015, Vice-President García Linera signalled that putting the time-period into the Law had been a mistake in the first place (Villa, 2015). Yet, actors critical of the government see this delay as an indication of lacking interest. Also, according to an academic from Santa Cruz, it was no coincidence that the first meeting was just some months before the subnational elections (Interview 26).

The fiscal pact II: Conformation between government vis-à-vis (oppositional) local and regional authorities

Between February 2015 and mid-2017, a total number of five sessions have taken place (CNA, n.d.). In the first session, the vice-president made clear that the fiscal pact

is a necessary element, but it has to contribute to, maintain, sustain and make the successful pluri-national development model better, it has to take place in the framework of the government plan, a strong presence of a redistributive state and it has to guarantee the Agenda 2025 (García Linera, cited by Chávez, 2015, author's translation).

Against the demands for redistribution, he argued that giving resources to the regions would not establish an equilibrium, but would mean turning back towards neoliberalism

the camouflaged neo-neoliberals, who are in some gobernaciones try to take from the central state, which has transformed itself into the motor of development, production, equality; they want to eradicate it while the attitude should be how do we produce more wealth (García Linera, cited by Erbol, 2015, author's translation).

It is questionable how far such confrontational approach is in line with Article 215 LMAD, which speaks of decisions being taken consensually.

In mid-2016, the situation became tenser, when oppositional governors and some mayors of large cities (Cochabamba, El Alto, La Paz, Potosí) demanded that against the background of the falling world

market prices that led to dramatically shrinking budgets, redistribution should be debated. The governor of La Paz, Felix Patzi, former MAS-IPSP ally and sometimes perceived as father of the *Vivir Bien* (Interview 20), even started a hunger strike to highlight the dramatic situation in the department. A representative from Tarija, sums up the opposition position as follows:

The fiscal pact is (...) to give (...) more financial resources to the gobernaciones, municipalities and universities so that they can advance the competences, which they have been assigned since 2010 (Peralta, cited by Cardozo, 2016, author's translation).

Local and regional authorities have increasingly negotiated and elaborated proposals for redistribution. They all forecast that fewer resources remain at the central level, suggesting that the central state should receive no more than 50 (Santa Cruz, Tarija) or 65 per cent (La Paz) of taxes or control less than 80 per cent of the budget (Gran Chaco) (see, among others, La Paz (SED-FMC/GADLP, 2017); Santa Cruz (GAD Santa Cruz, n.d.-e, p.17); Tarija (Escalante, 2017b); Gran Chaco (Alemán, 2017)).

The vice-president responded to these demands by criticising the rentier attitude of the actors and further blamed them for lacking capacity to generate proprietary resources (Los Tiempos, 2016). More recently, Vice-Minister Siles emphasised that the fiscal pact's vision is not redistributive, but that attention should be paid to the development of subnational policies, which generate proprietary resources (Los Tiempos, 2017c). Yet, as I showed above the current proprietary resources are not just limited, but also the possibility for raising more proprietary income is severely restrained.

An NGO employee highlights that the government is unwilling to open the debate on the fiscal pact on how development should happen, as would be the case in an autonomy regime (Interview 8), which would deepen decentralisation. In addition, the AIOC has not been on the agenda at all. At the time of writing, a signing of the fiscal pact was officially expected soon, but debates continue and are far from settled.

7.6. The flexible handling of autonomy in the international arena

While the Bolivian government has increasingly attempted to subordinate the other visions of autonomies to the social-communitarian state model associated with the idea of autonomy as self-determination of the *pueblo*, on the international stage, the pluri-national modality still appears more like a chameleon. This shows how the different visions of autonomy are present in the pluri-national modality.

7.6.1. Autonomy as sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo*

Within the social-communitarian state model, Bolivia is dependent on favourable deals with neighbouring countries to which it seeks to export resources from strategic sectors, mainly gas and

increasingly energy. Only with the generated surplus, can Bolivia's economy slowly undergo the aspired structural transformation (see 7.4.2.). Argentina and Brazil especially are key partners and signed large deals with Bolivia shortly after Morales' inauguration.

Simultaneously, as evident in measures like the investor fund, the government seeks to attract foreign companies, ensuring a favourable investment climate. After the renegotiation of contracts following nationalisation of hydrocarbons none of the companies left, and more deals were signed. In the Magazine of Siemens, the General Manager of state-owned electricity corporation ENDE emphasised 'we have felt the effects of the global decline in hydrocarbon prices and other commodities, but Bolivia's economy remains one of the most stable and fastest growing in the hemisphere' (Villarroel, 2016). Signing a deal with Siemens, Morales said that 'our fraternal entrepreneurs have energy guaranteed, we have spare energy, we have reserves and with these investments, we are getting ready to export' (cited by Cuiza, 2016, author's translation). On such occasions, he highlights Bolivia's (energy) sovereignty, stating, for example, that projects belong to Bolivia and not to the investor(s).

7.6.2. Autonomy as peoples' self-determination

The pluri-national modality at times also appears to support the self-determination of peoples. For a government-critical academic and former political authority, the international partners and organisations wish that 'all the indigenous works well' in Bolivia (Interview 32). In 2007, Bolivia was the first country to sign UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 61/295 and since early on, Morales and his long-term Foreign Minister Choquehuanca¹⁸⁹ have on various occasions given speeches emphasising their concern with Mother Earth and indigenous peoples. In the 2015 COP21 in Paris, for example, Morales claimed that 'Mother Earth is getting dangerously close to its end' and made the capitalist system responsible for this, 'saving Mother Earth to save life - that is our endeavour' (cited by Gosden and Samuel, 2015). On the 10th anniversary of the aforementioned 2007 UN Declaration, he pointed out that 'indigenous peoples are the moral compass of humanity, with their own ways of organization and production' (United Nations, 2017). The transformation of Bolivia, having gone from a colonial to a pluri-national and sovereign state would demonstrate what might be possible at the global level (ibid.).

At times, the AIOC has served as a signpost for underpinning these concerns and highlighting the advancement of processes in Bolivia. In May 2106, a Bolivian delegation, including the Minister of Autonomies Siles and indigenous authorities from Charagua and Raqaypampa, the most advanced transition processes (see Table 14), went to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of the United

¹⁸⁹ Choquehuanca, associated with the CSUTCB, was in office from 2006 to early 2017, when Huanacuni Mamani became Foreign Minister. Since March 2017, Choquehuanca is Secretary General of ALBA and is seen as Morales' potential successor if his re-election is prevented.

Nation (UNSDN, 2016). These authorities should share their experience of the advancing AIOC in Bolivia.

7.6.3. Autonomy as deepening of decentralisation

Finally, the third vision of autonomy becomes apparent at the international stage, too. This is realised, for example, in projects of Development Corporation, in which the Ministry of Autonomies is the national counterpart. When speaking to a representative of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), which was then about to sign a contract with the Bolivian government for a project supporting the autonomies, she saw the AIOC as a small 'lucky bag', not knowing what to expect (Interview 123). The 2015-2018 pilot project objective is that 'selected subnational authorities have created better conditions for the coordinated, decentralised provision of their services' in health and economic development (GIZ, n.d.). This project does not seem to differ from decentralisation projects in other (non-pluri-national) states.

7.7. Summing-up

In this chapter, I analysed how the central state components have mediated the new autonomy regime. In this, I showed that the pluri-national state and its central state components are characterised by the existence of three visions of autonomy, which respond to the different sets of struggles, introduced in Chapter 6. Yet, autonomy as deepened decentralisation, as self-determination of peoples and as national self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo* are inherently conflicting.

The autonomy regime itself seems, overall, to resemble one that promotes a rather conventional decentralisation. In this, AIOC appears as an annex, which is granted some specificity, finding expression in legislation and enforcing mechanisms. Profound change and moves towards decolonisation, required for the *different* state have not occurred. Instead, state-recognised peoples' self-determination and the AIOC seems largely subordinated to rule of money and law.

More generally, the whole autonomy regime appears limited by the government's concern for recuperating the sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo*, with which it seeks to achieve profitable accumulation by incorporating the powerful demands for a 'stronger state' and redistribution while mediating external pressures. Particularly, since the end of the resource boom, the government attempted to subordinate self-determination of peoples and deepened decentralisation to their vision of autonomy related to sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo*. This becomes apparent in shaping the enforcing mechanisms, enacting legislation with tightly controlled members of the Assembly and further practices concerned with local and regional directly-elected authorities, competences and resources.

Yet, it became apparent that this has not led to a reconciling of the contradictory tendencies between the different visions of the autonomy found in the pluri-national state. In addition, the presence of the different visions of autonomy can also be seen in the government's flexible use of it in the international sphere.

As shown in this chapter, despite the government's attempt to limit the space of the autonomy regime, it did not annihilate the different visions of autonomy or even the autonomy regime as such. The following chapter looks more closely at how the autonomy regime has unfolded beyond the central state, which also provides more insights into how earlier struggles have become redirected.

Chapter 8. The Pluri-national State: Autonomy regime beyond the central state and redirection of struggles

8.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I showed how demands for autonomy, which entered the pluri-national CPE, have been translated into and by the central state components. It became clear that the government, also intervening into the other state components, has made efforts to subordinate autonomy as peoples' self-determination and deepened decentralisation to the promoted autonomy as self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*. Yet, this did not lead to an annihilation of those other ideas of autonomy.

This chapter covers the last part of the form-analysis in moving back from the form to struggles. It sheds light on how state-recognised autonomies have advanced at local and regional levels and gives some indications how struggles for autonomy have been redirected. It is organised in three main parts, one for each type of newly recognised autonomy. In each of those, I first look at the processes of entering the autonomy regime and formal advancement. Then, I provide insights into present dynamics and challenges related to the redirection of struggles in pluri-national Bolivia. Yet, I acknowledge that all processes are complex, different and recent, and I can therefore give not more than an indication in this chapter.

8.2. Departmental autonomies

The incorporation of departmental autonomy into the 2009 CPE translated the demands for deepening decentralisation at the departmental level (see 6.2.1.). In the previous chapter, I showed how the government mostly seems to work against this, which has led, for example, to conflicts with the oppositional governors in the fiscal pact negotiations. In the next subsections, I demonstrate how the autonomy regime has unfolded at the departmental level. The formal advancements, which are described in more detail in what follows, are summarised in this table:

	RESULTS 1 st referendum: Entering the autonomy status	RESULTS 2 nd referendum: Statutes (2008)	RESULTS Control of statute by TCP ¹⁹⁰	RESULTS 2 nd referendum: Statutes (2015)
DEPARTMENTAL AUTONOMY				
CHUQUISACA	02.07.2006 62.23% NO 06.12.2009 84.63% YES	Not applicable	0039/2014 ¹⁹¹ 0022/2015 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 57.43% NO
COCHABAMBA	02.07.2006 63.03% NO 06.12.2009 80.34% YES	Not applicable	0056/2014 0026/2015 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 61.58% NO
LA PAZ	02.07.2006 73.44% NO 06.12.2009 78.42% YES	Not applicable	0042/2014 0044/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 68.06% NO
ORURO	02.07.2006 75.48% NO 06.12.2009 75.69% YES	Not applicable	0022/2014 0058/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 74.02% NO
POTOSI	02.07.2006 73.12% NO 06.12.2009 81.65% YES	Not applicable	0045/2014 0054/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 68.08% NO
BENI	02.07.2006 73.83% YES	01.06.2008 79.5% YES	No proposal presented	Not applicable
PANDO	02.07.2006 57.68% YES	01.06.2008 81.96% YES	0008/2013 0007/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	Not applicable
SANTA CRUZ	02.07.2006 71.11% YES	04.05.2008 85.6% YES	170/2016 DECLARED PARTIALLY CONSTITUTIONAL	Not applicable
TARIJA	02.07.2006 60.79% YES	22.06.2008 78.78% YES	0009/2014 0033/2015 0077/2015 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	Not applicable

Table 7: Formal advancement of departmental autonomy; sources: Georgetown University (2017) for 2006, 2008 and 2009 referenda; OEP (2015a) for 2015 referenda.

8.2.1 Entering the autonomy status and perfecting it with statutes

As in the case of the other two newly recognised types of autonomy, entering the departmental autonomy requires a supporting majority of voting-age population in the concerned territory. The CPE recognised the positive outcome of the 2006 referendum on departmental autonomy in some regions (see 6.3.3.), and so, the *media luna* departments Beni, Pando, Santa Cruz and Tarija could directly enter the departmental autonomy regime (Transitory Regulation No 3 I CPE). In the other five departments, where the majority had rejected the departmental autonomy in 2006, another referendum was needed.

¹⁹⁰ The declarations can be found via [https://buscador.tcpbolivia.bo/\(S\(0cbwp0xznyrzefvelz4nixwx\)\)/WfrResoluciones.aspx](https://buscador.tcpbolivia.bo/(S(0cbwp0xznyrzefvelz4nixwx))/WfrResoluciones.aspx), accessed on the 30.05.2017.

¹⁹¹ With the first declaration, the TCP returns the Statute with observations for modification and re-submission.

These referenda took place alongside the general elections of late 2009, in which Morales was re-elected as president with 64.22 per cent of the vote and the MAS-IPSP received over two thirds of seats in both chambers of the Pluri-national Assembly (Georgetown University, 2017). Following the MAS-IPSP' advice, in all five departments, over two thirds of the voters supported entering the autonomy regime (ibid.). Yet, a large share of the population did not know what autonomy would involve and also, for example, the LMAD was not yet in place (Interviews 84,86).

Having entered the autonomy regime, bringing autonomy to perfection needs a statute in force since until it is in place, the autonomy is exercised based on the framework law. Once the statute is in force, the autonomous territorial entity (ETA) ceases to depend on the LMAD and develops secondary legislation in the framework of the competences, established in its statute.

The new departmental assemblies, whose members were elected in the subnational election on the 4th of April 2010 (see Table 8), is key in this, since its members adopt the draft statute with a two-thirds majority before submitting it for the constitutionality check to the Pluri-national Constitutional Court (TCP) (Art. 61 I 2 LMAD). The statutes' minimum content is as follows (Art. 62 I LMAD):

1. Declaration of subjection to the CPE and laws
2. Identity of the autonomous entity
3. Location of its territorial jurisdiction
4. Organisational structure and identification of authorities
5. Form of organisation of the legislative or deliberative organ
6. Powers and attributes of the authorities, assuring compliance with the executive, legislative and deliberative functions; its election proceedings, requisites and periods of mandate
7. General dispositions about planning, administration of heritage and financial regime, clearly establishing the institutions and authorities of the administration and control of fiscal resources
8. Provisions for administrative de-concentration in the case needed
9. Mechanisms and forms of participation and social control
10. Regime for minorities which might or might not belong to the indigenous nations or *pueblos* and inhabit the territory
11. Regime of equality of gender, generations, and of people with disabilities
12. Institutional relations of the autonomous entity
13. Procedures of a total or partial reform of the statute
14. Dispositions regulating the transition until the statute is fully applied

If considered necessary by the *pueblo*, the statute can, for example, also cover official languages and symbols of the pluri-national state and own symbols (Art. 63 III LMAD).

With regards to how the statute is approved, CPE and LMAD distinguish between the four *media luna* departments, which had statutes adopted in the controversial 2008 referenda (see 6.3.4., Table 7) and the other five departments (3rd Transitory Regulation CPE; Art. 61 LMAD). For understanding if and how statutes have been adopted, it is important to take into consideration the political configuration at the departmental level, which are summarised in the following table:

	2010-2015 GOVERNOR	2010-2015 ASSEMBLY	2015- GOVERNOR	2015- ASSEMBLY
CHUQUISACA	Esteban Urquiza Cuellar – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 15 CST (Chuquisaca Somos Todos) 4 indigenous 2 ¹⁹²	Esteban Urquiza Cuellar – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 16 CST – 3 indigenous 2
COCHABAMBA	Edmundo Novillo Aguilar – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 27 UN-CP (Unidad Nacional por Cochabamba) 4 MSM (Movimiento sin Miedo) 1 indigenous 2	Ivan Canelas – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 26 Demócratas 5 Único 1 indigenous 2
LA PAZ	César Cocarico Yana – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 30 MSM 6 UN (Unidad Nacional) 2 MPS 1 indigenous 5	Felix Patzi – SOL.bo (Soberanía y Libertad)	MAS-IPSP 25 SOL 12 UN 2 ASP 1 indigenous 5
ORURO	Santos Tito – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 25 MSM 7 UN 1 indigenous	Victor Hugo Vasquez – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 22 PP 5 Demócratas 3 UN 1 MNR 1 UCR 1 indigenous
POTOSI	Félix Gonzalez Bernal – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 26 AS (Alianza Social) 3 FCRP 1 ACU 1	Juan Carlos Cejas – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 26 Potosí-MOP 4 UN 2
BENI	Ernesto Suarez – PRIMERO (2010-11), Haisen Ribera Leigue (MNR) (2011-13), Carmelo Lens - PRIMERO (2013-2015)	PRIMERO 10 MAS-IPSP 10 MNR-PUEBLO 3 indigenous 2 Peasants 2	Alex Ferrier – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 12 NACER 7 MNR 5 indigenous 2 Peasants 2
PANDO	Adolfo Flores Roberts – MAS-IPSP	CP (Consensus Popular) 8 MAS-IPSP 7 indigenous 1	Luis Flores – MAS-IPSP	MAS-IPSP 16 PUD 1 indigenous 1
SANTA CRUZ	Rubén Costas –Demócratas	Demócratas 12 MAS-IPSO 9 FA (Frente Amplio) 2 indigenous 5	Rubén Costas – Demócratas	Demócratas 17 MAS-IPSO 6 indigenous 5
TARIJA	Mario Cossío - CC (Camino al Cambio Alianza Nacional) (2010-11), Lino Condori – MAS-IPSP (2011-15)	MAS-IPSP 11 CC 9 PAN (Poder Autonomico Nacional) 6 indigenous 3	Adrian Oliva – UD-A	UD-A 13 MAS-IPSP 12 ISA 1 TPT 1 Indigenous 3

Table 8: Political configuration in departmental ETAs; sources: OEP (2010) for 2010 subnational elections; OEP (2015b) for 2015 subnational elections.

Adjusting the statutes with the CPE in the lowlands

As mentioned in 6.3.4., in Beni, Pando, Santa Cruz and Tarija, statutes had been elaborated parallel to the constituent process. Critics find that the elaboration of the statutes was not (sufficiently) participatory and that low numbers of votes cast made it impossible to derive legitimacy from them

¹⁹² IOC representatives are elected through traditions and customs (*usos y costumbres*) and not in the subnational elections.

(Interview 104). Nevertheless, actors involved in the process claim that, given the circumstances, it was as participatory as possible (Interview 72).

With the 2008 pact between prefects and MAS-IPSP government, the government accepted the statutes and referenda result under the condition that the statutes were made compatible with the CPE. This fundamentally involves a check of the TCP (3rd Transitory Regulation II CPE), which should take a maximum of 45 days (Art. 119 III Code of Constitutional Procedure 254/2012). The TCP can reject the proposed statute or declare it fully or partially constitutional¹⁹³. In the latter case, the statute can be adapted and resubmitted.

At the time of writing, only Pando and Tarija had approved statutes (Ministerio de Autonomías, 2015). In Pando, the statute entered into force in 2014 and Tarija's statute was declared constitutional in 2015 (see Table 7). In Tarija, the process was tense since the elected governor from the national opposition, Cossío, was forced out of office in 2011 and replaced by an interim governor from MAS-IPSP, who remained in office until 2015 (see 7.5.3.). In addition, the national opposition held a majority in the departmental assembly, but not the two thirds required for approving the adjustments.

In Santa Cruz, the statute was sent to the TCP some months after the subnational elections in 2015, in which the national opposition gained a two third majority in the assembly (Interviews 33,34). Members from the largest party led by the governor Costas, the VERDES, describe the assembly members from MAS-IPSP as solely responding to the national party, which is why they had blocked the earlier adoption of the statute, necessary for the submission to the TCP (Interviews 29,33). After 17 months instead of the legal prescribed maximum of 45 days, the TCP declared the partial constitutionality of the submitted proposal (Table 7).

A statute from Beni has not been presented to the TCP. The first assembly had been balanced, with no party having a strong majority, while three different governors had been in place, which led to disruptions. Since the 2015 election, the scenario looks more favourable, since MAS-IPSP has a majority, and could obtain two thirds when collaborating with indigenous and peasant assembly members. Also the governor comes from the MAS-IPSP. Yet, it requires an analysis of the particular setting to see why no statute has been presented.

The process of making the statutes compatible with the CPE is criticised by lowland actors from the national opposition. The whole process would take far longer than expected and the TCP would have always exceeded its prescribed deadline by far, which is why people would get tired of the topic

¹⁹³ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate on the rulings of the TCP. See Ministerio de Autonomías (2015) for all submitted statute projects with the observations and adjustment made.

(Interview 34). In addition, the idea of making the statute compatible curtails the autonomy, especially since the TCP would be co-opted by the MAS-IPSP (Interview 103). In Bolivia, the judges of the TCP and other high courts are publicly elected (Chapter V, Law 26/2010) and the candidate selection before the 2011 elections and campaigning caused controversial and polarised discussions. While the government speaks of a deepening of democracy, critics point to the heavy involvement of the MAS-IPSP in the election, seeking to bring in their preferred candidates. Similar debates can be observed in the run-up to the elections which are planned to take place in December 2017.

The statutes in the valleys and highlands

After Chuquisaca, Cochabamba, La Paz, Oruro and Potosí had entered the autonomy regime following the referenda, the elaboration of statutes was the key task of the first departmental assemblies, even mentioned as first exclusive competence of the departmental ETAs (Art. 300 I 1. CPE). As visible in Table 8, in all five assemblies, the MAS-IPSP had an overwhelming majority, enabling it to approve the draft statutes without forming alliances. In addition, the governors also came from the MAS-IPSP.

All assemblies managed to adopt a draft statute that was submitted to the TCP, where it remained for over a year in most cases instead of 45 days. While the statutes were in the TCP, the next round of subnational elections took place in May 2015. In these, the MAS-IPSP maintained their large majority in the five assemblies and control over four of the five *gobernaciones*¹⁹⁴ (see Table 8). In Cochabamba, Oruro and Potosí almost all, if not all, members of the assemblies from the MAS-IPSP were replaced and it is likely that something similar occurred in Chuquisaca and La Paz (Interviews 80,104). This led to a situation in which new assembly members had to diffuse a statute that they did not elaborate and encourage participation in the referenda that were needed for adopting the statutes. In all five departments, the majority rejected the statutes in September 2015, leaving them without an autonomy statute in force (see Table 7).

The interviewees who had been directly involved in or closely followed the processes in Oruro, Potosí and Cochabamba, observed a lack of autonomist spirit among the local politicians and people more generally compared with the *media luna* (Interviews 73,79). The assembly members from the MAS-IPSP are often seen as lacking the technical and legal knowledge of the process (Interviews 73,75,77,80,103), which government critics see as a MAS-IPSP strategy to better ensure their control over the assemblies (Interview 80). The assembly members from the MAS-IPSP I encountered had been peasant leaders and mining unionists before becoming politicians and often originated from rural communities. Critics claim that these assembly members would then not act as proper community leaders, but just respond to the party line (Interviews 35,87,98,104). In this context, the

¹⁹⁴ Felix Patzi, a former ally of Morales, became Governor of La Paz (also 7.5.3.).

replacement of most or all assembly members is seen by critics as a way of preventing the growing independence of assembly members through the accumulation of knowledge and experience.

The rejected statutes are often said to have come from the national level and not from the local population and to represent a centralising logic (Interviews 29,30,71,75), which is sometimes backed up with an argument that the observations from the TCP were mostly of a formal nature (Interview 101). Locals reported that initially local organisations and populations were invited to submit proposals, yet those were later not or only partially included (Interviews 75,96,101).

While a former senator from Oruro recalled that the vice-president interpreted the rejection of the statutes as evidence that the *pueblo* wants a strong central state as suggested in the social-communitarian model (Interview 75), my research showed that a crucial aspect in the rejection was a lack of information or even misinformation. (Former) members of the assemblies state that the dissemination of the statute went well, or, at least, that they did their best (Interviews 80,87,104). More critical voices say that especially in rural areas, people were not familiar with the statute's content, making them prone to spreading rumours which arguably fed into rejecting the statutes (Interviews 35,42,89,97). While *MASistas* claim that many people would not have been interested in the matter, other say that they should have taken more time to explain the content of the statute to the population (Interviews 77,88,95). In Oruro, for example, people thought that taxes were established with the statute, according to which they would have to pay for each llama or similar, which is incorrect (Interviews 74,88,89). My spot checks in rural communities confirmed this misinformation. The people associated with the MAS-IPSP accuse the opposition of having spread the rumour, and vice versa (Interviews 87,95).

At the time of writing, none of the five assemblies had submitted a new statute for constitutional control. The then president of the assembly in Oruro claimed that they would leave the elaboration of a new proposal to the next assembly which assumes office after the next subnational elections scheduled for 2020 (Interview 87). During fieldwork, also in Potosí and Cochabamba, they had not started to rework it either (Interviews 96,97).

8.2.2. Departmental ETAs in practice

In this subsection, I present some insights into how the departmental ETAs have been operating in past years and how far struggles for departmental autonomy have become redirected. As explained in 7.5.3., limited resources are a key challenge for the departmental ETAs (apart from Tarija), as this is widely perceived as limiting the capacity to exercise autonomy. It is widely acknowledged that this matter needs resolution at the national level, and thus – avoiding repetition – I will not discuss it here further.

Legislative activity

A key innovation of the autonomy regime is that the departmental, municipal and AIOC ETAs can enact laws. In the first term of the departmental ETAs, a total number of 1,178 laws were enacted, making an average of 131 per department. This number is high when comparing to it to the 1,713 municipal laws, which came into force, meaning around five per municipality. The following table shows the number of laws per department, indicating a large variation.

Beni	Chuquisaca	Cochabamba	La Paz	Oruro	Pando	Potosí	Santa Cruz	Tarija
41	215	517	74	68	22	49	72	120

Table 9: No of laws adopted per department (2010-2015) (data provided by the *Ministerio de Autonomías*)

Looking more closely at the new laws, the Ministry of Autonomies classified 133 of these 1,178 laws, that is 11.3 per cent, as regulatory ones – all others are considered declaratory (ibid.). Despite variations between assemblies, over two thirds of the laws in each department are non-regulatory.

Around half of the departmental laws concern the annual operational plan, the budget and the administration, followed by around 14 per cent being related to culture and tourism, for example, declaring something cultural patrimony or granting a holiday. Of the areas with more potential for regulation, seven per cent are related to productive development, commerce and agribusiness and five per cent concern children, women and the elderly. Three and two per cent of the laws relate to motorways and roads as well as sports (ibid.). This indicates that so far the departmental ETAs have overall not yet started to properly exercise their legislative competences.

While the severe budget limitations are seen as playing a role in explaining this, the aforementioned apparent lack of education and experience of the assembly members as well as control from the centre, especially the MAS-IPSP in the highlands, are often considered key contributors to the limited regulatory legislation (Interviews 29,37,75). A former oppositional member of the assembly in Oruro told me the following anecdote, which gives an indication of how law-making at the departmental level can operate:

When I was member of the assembly (...) the investment budget of Oruro was approximately 150 million BOB, around 20 million USD, little. As Evo goes to all communities by plane or whatever, and plays football and he has gifted so many pitches already, someone said to the members of the assembly from the MAS: you approve a law so that every province has a pitch (...) with money from the gobernación. They proposed a law, and said 32 million BOB of the 150, so that each of the 16 provinces has its pitch. Of course, I was opposed to this (...). How is it possible that we spend 32 million on pitches, when the budget for agricultural development is six million?¹⁹⁵ (Interview 80)

¹⁹⁵ Oruro, 14.04.2016.

Relations between ETAs' organs

The relationship between assemblies and *gubernaciones* is described as far from the imagined ideal of respect and control, while the population pays the price for the mismanagement (Interviews 43,45,77). In cases like Oruro, Potosí and Santa Cruz, where both organs are controlled by the same party, the assembly's control of the executive is de facto absent, since the assembly is perceived as subordinated to the governor (Interviews 77,79,97). In the case of Tarija, where the organs had been controlled by different political forces, collaboration was reported to often fail (Interviews 43,52) – the governor would govern with decrees and the laws from the assemblies would not be applied (Interview 70). Santa Cruz's autonomy process appears the most advanced process, which might not come as a surprise given the historical antecedents (see 6.2.1.). Here, assembly members insist that they speak up against the governor if they disagree – it does not matter if (s)he is from the same party or not, it is part of their mandate (Interviews 19,33).

Interaction with municipalities and the central state enforcing mechanisms

Also the relationship with the municipalities poses a challenge to the departmental autonomy processes. In some cases, due to political or personal rivalries, there is severe misspending instead of collaboration or coordination and the lack of clarity in the competence regime does not help (Interview 23, see 7.2. and 7.3.2.).

Employees of the Ministry of Autonomies told me they observe large differences between the attitudes of people working in the ETAs. In the highlands and valleys, at seminars or similar, people expect that the ministry staff tells them what to do and how to do it (Interviews 12,30,75). Government programmes like the '*Evo cumple*' that helps to distort local planning would not help them to start assuming their role and exercise the autonomy.

In turn, in the lowlands, in particular, in Santa Cruz and Tarija, actors would take more initiatives. In Santa Cruz, assembly members point to the notion of '*autonomía al andar*', frequently used by the governor to describe the autonomies as a process, meaning that while working within the existing framework, the struggle continues (Interview 29). At the same time, following the Director of the State Autonomy Service (SEA), Santa Cruz and Tarija would not even consult the SEA for questions but figure them out themselves, since they mistrust the supposedly government-led SEA (Interview 4). Yet, this is also possible because their advisors and technical staff are widely described as more competent than those in other departments.

IOC members of assemblies

A crucial demand of indigenous groups was to enhance their representation. In those departmental assemblies where representation is not expected to occur automatically, up to five seats are reserved

for indigenous representatives and, in the case of Beni, peasants (see Table 8). These assembly members are generally not seen as having so far made a great difference, which is partly related to the small numbers (Interviews 19,40,87,95). Those who had been in this position, or served as advisors in Santa Cruz and Tarija, reported racism or discrimination and that they were not taken seriously in the assembly if they did not join one of the parliamentary groups (Interviews 28,64,68). A former indigenous representative from Tarija said that he felt that the different groups in the assembly sought to use him to get his vote and did not show real interest in his concerns (Interview 63). For other (former) assembly members, the IOC representatives are incompetent and replaced too often¹⁹⁶, making it difficult to collaborate with them (Interviews 30,33,37,40).

Redirection of struggles outside the state

As seen in 7.5.3., Santa Cruz and Tarija, are, together with Patzi, at the forefront of the opposition in the fiscal pact. Yet, their power is perceived smaller compared to the early 2000s – it appears mainly as political opposition that is not backed anymore by the key business elites (Interviews 12,18). Radical *cruceño* voices have also softened. A former president of the Civic Committee and key figure in the *Nación Camba* (see 6.2.1.) told me that the Camba Nation is one of the nations in the pluri-national state (Interview 15).

At the same time, in some instances, local or regional actors or organisations from the highlands started picking up the notion of (departmental) autonomy. This is remarkable since, as shown in Chapters 5 and 6, these departments do not have a history of such struggles. For example, the president of the Civic Committee of Potosí, who is not associated with a party, advocated a deepening of the autonomies, at some points even suggesting a federal state model, which entered national headlines in mid-2015. It is his mission to bring the resources to Potosí, which Bolivia historically owes (Interview 96). These would be desperately needed to combat the high levels of poverty, the lack of decent employment opportunities and the poor quality of public education and health care (ibid.). Despite not having had success in the attempt demanding a rewriting of the CPE, the initiative has raised awareness and he optimistically sees the autonomist spirit growing.

8.3. Regional autonomy/ies

As shown in 6.2.1., the demand for regional autonomy was closely associated with the hydrocarbon-rich Chaco region. So far, the Gran Chaco province in Tarija is the only case, where the state-recognised regional autonomy has advanced, as the following table shows:

¹⁹⁶ They are elected following *usos y costumbres*, making it possible that they are replaced during the electoral term. A former representative sees a key problem in that there is little understanding in the communities of the processes in the assembly and the dynamics surrounding it – therefore, he found it hard to explain why he could not achieve what his people had asked him to do and he was replaced rather quickly (Interview 63).

	RESULT 1 st referendum	RESULT Control of statute by TCP ¹⁹⁷	RESULT 2 nd referendum: Statute
REGIONAL AUTONOMY			
GRAN CHACO TARIJEÑO	06.12.2009 80,45% YES	0055/2014 ¹⁹⁸ 0010/2015 0062/2015 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.11.2016 CARAPARÍ: 77.22% YES VILLAMONTES: 77.40% YES YACUIBA: 69.35% YES

Table 10: Formal advancement of regional autonomy; sources: Georgetown University (2017) for 2009 referendum; OEP (2016) for 2016 referendum.

The scope the regional autonomy

Following the CPE, the regional autonomy is made up of various municipalities or provinces with geographic continuity and that belong to the same department (Art. 280 CPE). The inclusion of the departmental limits had been a crucial point in the 2008 pact between prefects and the national government (see 6.3.4.) – yet, this was not what Chaco authorities and civil society organisations had originally wanted envisioning a large Chaco region, uniting the three Chacos of Chuquisaca, Santa Cruz and Tarija (Interviews 53,58,64).

As pointed out in 7.2., the CPE does not assign legislative power and, more generally, competences to the regional ETAs, but states that it receives competences through transfer or delegation¹⁹⁹, which happens with two thirds of votes in the departmental assembly (Art. 280 III, 301 CPE). With Departmental Law 079/2013, Tarija's departmental assembly conferred all possible competences to the Gran Chaco region.

Accessing the regime and 'perfecting' the autonomy

As visible in the table above, in late 2009, parallel to the national election and referenda on departmental autonomies, over eighty percent of the votes cast in the Gran Chaco province were in favour of a regional autonomy. In the subnational elections in April 2010, in each of the three municipalities, voters decided over two representatives for the assembly. The three indigenous groups in the area, Guaraní, Weenhayek and Tapiete, sent – following their customs – one member for the assembly each. Over the next years, the assembly had the primary task of elaborating the statute (see 8.2.1. for the minimum content), which later received approval from the TCP and from 73 per cent of the voters in the September 2016 referendum (see Table 10).

¹⁹⁷ The declarations can be found via [https://buscador.tcpbolivia.bo/\(S\(0cbwp0xznyrzefvelz4nixwx\)\)/WfrResoluciones.aspx](https://buscador.tcpbolivia.bo/(S(0cbwp0xznyrzefvelz4nixwx))/WfrResoluciones.aspx), accessed on the 30.05.2017.

¹⁹⁸ With the first declaration, the TCP returns the Statute with observation for modification and re-submission.

¹⁹⁹ In simple terms, a delegation can be reversed by the delegator, while, when competences are transferred, this cannot be cancelled.

Even though local authorities and representatives of civil society organisations highlight the unity of the actors involved in the process, during the elaboration of the statute conflicts came to the forefront. In this, splits occurred along municipal rather than party lines (Interviews 57,59). While Yacuiba has the largest population (92,245, Census 2012²⁰⁰), most tapped hydrocarbons reserves are in Caraparí, inhabited by around 15,000 people. The third municipality, Villamontes, has approximately 40,000 inhabitants. The initial proposal established that the headquarters of the regional ETA would be in Villamontes and the assembly in Caraparí. Yet, authorities from Yacuiba were unwilling to accept this and the statute in force shows a compromise, placing the seat of the regional assembly in Villamontes (Art. 23) and the headquarters in Yacuiba (Art. 34). In Caraparí, the regional treasury is likely to be established, even though it is not written in the statute (Interview 54).

A similar compromise is evident in the three figures in the executive organ comprising a regional *ejecutivo* and two *ejecutivos* of development (Interviews 54,56). While the first is elected by universal suffrage in the region and is hence expected to come from Yacuiba (Interview 54), Villamontes and Caraparí elect one development *ejecutivo* each (Art. 52 Statute Gran Chaco).

All about controlling the 45 per cent?

This apparent lack of willingness to enter a deeper regional process can be partly understood against the background of disappointment due to the restrictions in CPE and LMAD that establish the regional autonomy as a space of joint planning. Yet, it is also often seen as an indication that this autonomy project serves the consolidation of the 45 per cent of the *regalías*, which was achieved some years before (see 6.2.1.). The management of their own resources was mentioned to me as key aim of the autonomy by different leaders of local civil society organisations and local politicians (Interviews 57,58,60,65,66,71). As pointed out in 6.2.1., in first decade of the 21st century, exports rose, leading to rising *regalías*²⁰¹.

Before the regional autonomy, the 45 per cent went to and were controlled by local representatives of the *gobernación*, who did not always get along with the mayors (Interview 70). In Tarija, the *ejecutivo seccional*/sub-governor²⁰² had been directly elected by the population, but especially since the direct election of the prefect in 2005, this figure was controversially discussed (Lizárrago Aranibar and Vacaflares Rivero, 2007, p.80). Initially, Prefect Cossío sought to appoint the *ejecutivos seccionales*, which caused conflict, agitated by the peasant movement (ibid., pp.80-85). In the control

²⁰⁰ Census data taken from CEDIB (2013).

²⁰¹ In 2000, 763 million cubic meters of gas and one million barrels of liquid hydrocarbons were produced in Tarija, making up 24 and eight per cent of national production – in 2011, production had risen to 11,198 million cubic meters and 11.6 million barrels that together accounted for 71 per cent of national production (Torres Orías, 2012).

²⁰² The prefect appointed *ejecutivos seccionales*; when the figure was replaced by the governor, his regional representatives became sub-governors.

of their statute, the TCP declared Article 88, which mentions the sub-governor, incompatible with the CPE (Resolution 0009/2014, see Ministerio de Autonomías (2015, pp.8;114)). This was often interpreted as if the governor would have to appoint her/his local representatives (Interview 47). However, some actors argued that it was only a formal observation, since the 2010 subnational election had taken place under National Transitory Law 017/2010, which did not prohibit the election of *ejecutivos seccionales*/sub-governors (Balderas, 2014). The Article 88 of the draft also did not talk about the direct election. The second interpretation was favoured by the national government and in the 2015 subnational election, sub-governors were elected again. Yet, the debate reaffirmed local actors in the importance of ensuring local resources control (Interviews 54,55). With the regional autonomy, the figure of sub-governor disappears in the region.

Distribution inside the region

Even though Supreme Decree 331/2009 consolidated the split of the 45 per cent of *regalías* into 15 per cent per municipality that had been negotiated earlier (see 6.2.1.), it remained a contested question. A compromise needed to be found with regards to the budget of the regional ETA, which mostly consists of royalty transfers and other transfers from the ETAs that constitute it (Art. 107 LMAD, see 7.3.2.). As can be seen in the following table, the municipalities in the Gran Chaco province have had in the past years a higher than average budget per inhabitant than the Bolivian average; yet, there are large differences between them:

	Average Current Budget 2010-2015 (in BOB)	Average Current Budget/Population
Yacuiba	512 403 812.46	5 554.81
Caraparí	230 353 250.18	14 991.10
Villamontes	260 894 892.81	6 544.13
All Municipalities	23 964 209 932.92	2 306.49

Table 11: Budget of Gran Chaco municipalities (2010-2015) (census data from CEDIB (2013), budget from SEA (2016))

For each person, Caraparí had over six times more resources than the Bolivian average and twice as much as Yacuiba and Villamontes, where authorities claim that this is not just. Yet, in Caraparí, it is considered fair due to the environmental damage and the social costs of extraction. With the regional autonomy, the deal among local actors is that out of the 15 per cent, ten directly go to each municipality, while the remaining five per cent is given to the regional autonomy for financing joint projects (Interview 65). This is perceived as a piece of evidence for unwillingness or incapacity to move beyond a municipal logic (Interview 66).

Challenges ahead for the Gran Chaco

The relationship between regional autonomy and municipality is far from clear and the competences are partly unclearly defined (Interviews 54,65). It remains to be seen what happens once the

authorities assume office. Yet, the scenario with mayor and regional authorities plus governor, seems to provide much room for conflict.

During my visit, shortly after the TCP's approval of the statute, which was perceived as a major step forward, representatives of civil society organisations and local politicians were relieved and said how the statute had been elaborated in a participatory way and how the regional autonomy would be a joint project by all people of the Gran Chaco province (Interviews 53,59, 61). Yet, local analysts doubt that this sense of unity will last long and share the concern that the whole project might not last much longer than the non-renewable resources (Interviews 39,54).

As in the case of the departmental assembly, the incorporation of indigenous representatives in the project through the assembly members has not been as imagined by some (Interview 39). A former assembly member, representing an indigenous *pueblo* reported that he only felt included and heard when joining a municipal group (Interview 53). For local observers, the indigenous representative have been soon or later co-opted by other interests (Interview 55,56).

After my stay in the Gran Chaco, my major concern was how far the Regional Autonomy would change the situation of the local population. Taking back control over *our* Chaco was declared by representatives of civil society organisations and indigenous authorities as the great hope associated with the regional autonomy (Interviews 53,57,59,63). The many resources received in the last years were often spent on highly visible expensive cement projects, such as building infrastructure, *plazas*, among others, which critics considered unnecessary and often of poor quality (Interviews 33,60,62,66,70). Despite all the resources, poverty remains wide-spread, particularly in rural areas, and there has been little socio-economic development (Interviews 6,7,55,56,69). I visited communities located next to the gas pipeline without electricity and/or access to water. For a local analyst, sustainable development and proper planning look different (Interview 54).

Regional Autonomy as a tool for disturbing the opposition or pressuring GAD more generally?

Several people in the departmental capital see that the regional autonomy leads to a fragmentation of the department, which also complicates the competence regime (Interviews 36,39). For an analyst, inclusion of the regional autonomy was an intelligent move by the government, it is 'a deception to keep the Chaco quiet'²⁰³ (Interview 52). For a departmental *asambleísta* and important figure in the national opposition, it leads to distortions in the management of Tarija and potentially other resource-rich places, which might prevent the development of a strong national opposition (movement) that could get into the way of the government's overall strategy (see 7.4.2) (Interview 40).

²⁰³ Tarija, 01.03.2016.

During fieldwork, three other municipalities in Tarija (Entre Ríos, Bermejo and Padcaya) began speaking of forming a regional autonomy. A key figure was the directly elected sub-governor of the Burdett O'Connor province from the MAS-IPSP, who was in political opposition to the governor. This province, consisting only of the Entre Ríos municipality, borders on the Gran Chaco province and claims ownership of one mega field (Interview 50). At the heart of this initiative, pushed by local authorities associated with the MAS-IPSP, was the demand for 45 per cent of *regalías* – but local actors were inconsistent about whether this was 45 per cent of what was produced in their municipalities or in the whole department (Interviews 37,40,44,50,56,71). Since the initiative has advanced rather slowly since then, some people suggest that it had only been an instrument to pressure the *gobernación* (Interview 38). Yet, in 2017, when demanding a renegotiation of the departmental fiscal pact, they pushed for changing the Law 3038/2000, which assigned 45 per cent of the *regalías* of the department to the Gran Chaco province, regardless of where they are generated (see 6.2.1.). For them, the 45 per cent should be assigned to each producing region, based on production in its territory (Escalante, 2017a).

Additionally, in the hydrocarbon-rich Chaco in Chuquisaca, the regional autonomy has on occasion been considered as an option for enhancing local control over resources (Interview 54). Furthermore, in Potosí, some local authorities from a mineral-rich rural area brought the topic of the regional autonomy onto the agenda of the departmental assembly (Interviews 97,98). So far, none of these initiatives have developed further, yet they indicate that in the future especially people from (resource-rich) rural areas could increasingly use the regional autonomy banner to press the GAD or even the national government to pay attention to their situation.

8.4. AIOC

The AIOC is seen as the single most important category that concretises peoples' self-determination, closely entwined with the idea of the pluri-national state and guaranteed in Article 2 CPE. Yet, as shown throughout the previous chapter, the government has curtailed the space of peoples' self-determination. The following subsections look in more detail at the transition process, the involvement of the state's enforcing mechanisms and NGOs, the formal advancement as well as local dynamics.

8.4.1 The process of transitioning towards an AIOC

The LMAD concretises preconditions and prescribes a procedure for the transition towards an AIOC, which is often perceived as a source of frustration by those who had wanted peoples' self-determination (Interview 89). An AIOC-supporting authority from Charagua recalled that

When this possibility of the autonomy came, we were happy [saying] "Good, let's go", because we had been independent. But no, we did not know that they would put us these limitations²⁰⁴ (Interview 116).

The transition towards an AIOC can either happen on the basis of a municipality or of a TIOC. For an NGO worker, this already violates Article 2 CPE as municipalities do usually not overlap with the ancestral territories and the TIOC-based transition, which is often the only option for minority lowland peoples, is limited in that titling has been on hold since 2010 (Interviews 14,21). Since the TIOC status implies rights such as the right to prior consultation, not granting titles can be seen as a way of avoiding strengthening the rights of those who might object to resource exploitation (Interview 7).

Requisites

The following table lists the requisites for entering the AIOC transition:

TIOC-based AIOC	Municipality-based AIOC
1. Certification of ancestral territory (Art. 56 LMAD)	1. Certification of ancestral territory (Art. 56 LMAD)
2. Verification of Population Basis (Art. 58 LMAD) Highlands: 10,000 inhabitants or more (in the cases of minority <i>pueblos</i> , an exception can be made, which reduces the minimum to 4,000 inhabitants) Lowlands: 1,000 inhabitants or more, can be handled more flexibly if other requisites are met	
3. Certification of Viabilidad Gubernamental (Art. 57 LMAD)	

Table 12: Requirements for accessing the AIOC status

For ancestral land certification, the accredited IOC authority has to request this from the Ministry of Autonomies and after verification, the ministry hands over the certificate to the authorities (Art. 56 LMAD). For critics, this conflicts with the idea of the pluri-national state, since the state needs to verify the indigenous peoples pre-conquest existence, often using documentation from colonial times (Interviews 17,39,54). Particularly, for the TIOC aspiring to transition, this step would be inappropriate, since to receive the TIOC title an ethnic identity certificate (INRA, n.d.) would already have been required (Interview 14). Yet, from the government perspective, it is argued that this is a different certificate, more related to territory (Interview 1). In addition, this requisite would prohibit that the people, who migrate from the highlands to the valley and lowlands, form AIOC in TIOC, which may be inhabited by other smaller indigenous groups (ibid.).

In the case of the TIOC, the LMAD mentions two more requisites. First, the population basis needs verification by the central state (Art. 58 LMAD). Looking at the 2012 census, 14 of the 31 ethnicities found in the lowlands and valleys have less than 1.000 inhabitants (CEJIS, 2013) and remain hence

²⁰⁴ Charagua, 13.05.2016.

excluded from the process – even if they had a TIOC in which all of them live. Moreover, half of the existing TIOC in the lowlands do not meet the population requirement (Fundación Tierra, 2012a).

Secondly, the 'governance viability' requires certification (Art. 57 LMAD). This refers to the existing capacity for management of the territory, the exercise of public responsibilities and obligations assigned by the CPE and LMAD. The LMAD mentions two requisites:

- ❖ **Organisation:** The TIOC has an organisational structure, which includes all IOC organisations inhabiting the territory, considering the participation of women and minorities.
- ❖ **Territorial Plan:** The TIOC presents a plan, which includes the institutional and financial strategies for the development of the region. The Ministry of Autonomies approves the proposal, submitted by the accredited IOC authorities.

For senior state employees involved in the elaboration of law, these requisites are key to ensure that the AIOC can fulfil the tasks and perform the proposed functions (Interview 9). A state employee with long experience in working on the Bolivian decentralisation process, claims that giving small populations competences and resources would be 'absurd' and 'institutionally impractical' (Interview 70). Yet, the director of a key lowland NGO finds that these rules demonstrate the top-down way the government wants to run the AIOC, which goes against the idea of self-determination (Interview 14).

The steps of the transition

The following table lists the steps of the transition to an AIOC:

TIOC-based AIOC	Municipality-based AIOC
Step 1: Consultation (Art. 294 I CPE, Art. 50 IV LMAD)	Step 1: Referendum (Art. 294 II CPE, Art. 50 II LMAD, Art. 24 Law 026/2010)
<i>Creation of a new territorial entity by the Pluri-national Assembly</i>	
Step 2a: Formation of deliberative organ (Art. 53 I LMAD)	
Step 2b: Elaboration of the statute by the deliberative organ (Art. 60, 62 LMAD)	
Step 3: Control of constitutionality of the statute through the TCP (Art. 53 II LMAD)	
Step 4: Approval of statute through <i>normas y procedimientos propios</i> followed by a referendum (Art. 54 LMAD)	Step 4: Referendum on statute (Art. 54 LMAD)

Table 13: Steps in the AIOC transition

Step 1: Consultation/referendum

In the case of the TIOC, a consultation is to be carried out by the TIOC-holders, following their own norms and procedures (Art. 294 I CPE, Art. 50 IV LMAD). This is supervised by a unit in the Pluri-national Electoral Organ (OEP), called Intercultural Service of Democratic Strengthening (SIFDE). If the outcome is positive, the transition continues and apart from the locally-centred process, a new territorial entity must be created by the Pluri-national Assembly by law before the statute can be approved.

In the case of municipality, IOC authorities initiate a referendum, in which the population is asked whether or not to enter the transition process (Art. 294 II CPE, Art. 50 II LMAD, Art. 24, Law of the Electoral Regime 26/2010). The outcome is binding for the municipal council (Art. 50 II LMAD). Close

to 200 of over 300 municipalities are inhabited by a majority of indigenous people (Albó and Romero, 2009) and in over 140 highland and valley municipalities, over 90 percent of the population self-identifies as indigenous (Cameron, 2012). In the vast majority of municipalities in the lowlands, indigenous peoples are in minority, which makes a transition on a municipal base unlikely.

Step 2: Deliberative organ and elaboration of statute

When the referendum has had a positive outcome, a deliberative organ or equivalent is elected following its own norms and procedures and supervised by the SIFDE (Art. 53 I No 3; 5 LMAD). The deliberative organ is expected to collect proposals and elaborate a draft statute, which needs – as in the case of the departmental and regional autonomy – approval from at least two thirds of its members (Art. 53 I LMAD).

The minimal content of the statute is same as for other types of autonomy (Art. 62 I LMAD, see 8.2.1.), but must additionally include the following points (Art. 62 II LMAD):

1. The definition of the vision and strategies of its own development, in accordance with principles, rights and cultural values.
2. The definition of the organ and system of administration of justice.
3. Planning of the decision of the *pueblo* to renew periodically the confidence in their authorities.

Overall, the prescriptions allow for some specificity. For example, the existence of political parties is not required, which are key actors in the modern Western logic of organising society, but are not found in the ancestral indigenous cultures (Interview 10). None of the already existing AIOC statutes proposes political parties (Tockman, 2017b). Yet, looking at other aspects, these content prescriptions are restrictive. The requirement of defining deliberative and executive organs (Art 62 I No 5 LMAD) reflects the modern idea of separation of powers that is alien to the (traditional) organisation of *ayllus*, for example. In these, thinking of executive, legislative and judicial powers as separated entities does not exist (see 5.2.). For a former indigenous authority from Oruro,

*the power is communitarian, communal. How is this communal power tied together? [With] a head which consults everything. But in the municipal environment, there is a head that decides without consulting all. And these [heads] are then the extension leads, which outline the LMAD. And this is your way of organising yourself. But if we speak of autonomy, why don't you let me organise myself?*²⁰⁵ (Interview 79)

A challenge in the AIOC specific content – and beyond – is that proper institutions and procedures are not – and probably cannot be – clearly defined. Local experts claim that it is hardly possible to draw a line between what is 'colonial' and what is 'indigenous' (Interviews 10,14,21). Religion and related customs are particularly tricky and contested themes (Interview 82).

²⁰⁵ Oruro, 14.04.2016.

In the case of (former) municipalities, a major concern is that the statutes would be prone to be *municipalistas* (Interview 7). Since there are only few existing statutes and processes, it is too early to say if and how the AIOC goes beyond the municipal logic. Analysis of the existing statutes reveals that it varies from one case to the other, how far the given space for going beyond the municipal organisation is used or not (for example, Exeni Rodríguez, 2015; Tockman, 2017b). For a NGO worker from Oruro, a hybrid model is created in all cases, which in one way or the other brings together a municipal system with its own norms and procedures (Interview 84). I return to this in 8.4.4.

So far, Raqaypampa is the only TIOC-based AIOC and was during fieldwork the only advanced process in transition. Before entering the process, Raqaypampa had been a municipal district, which is why observers question that this AIOC surpasses the municipal logic (Interviews 10,101). For a fierce government opponent, 'the design is completely municipal, in other words, this means they end up being an indigenous municipality'²⁰⁶ (Interview 103). This overlaps with Tockman (2017b), who analysed drafts of all AIOC statutes and classified them on a communitarian versus liberal-municipal continuum, and placed Raqaypampa on the liberal-municipal extreme. However, it remains to be seen how the process evolves further.

Step 3: Control of constitutionality

As with the departmental and regional autonomies, the draft statute, once adopted by the deliberate organ, is submitted to the TCP which within 45 days rejects it, declares it as constitutional, or returns it with observation (Art. 53 III LMAD, Art. 119 III Code of Constitutional Procedure 254/2012). Like in the case of the other autonomies, the 45-day-period was so far massively exceeded. An indigenous authority from a municipality in transition experiences this process as follows,

[i]n the communities from which I come, we have norms and customs, but according to the CPE and TCP that is not good. Therefore, we have to change, in other words, they constrain and this constraints we do not like much, not totally, but it always constraints us. This is centralism, they want to manage everything from above²⁰⁷ (Interview 91).

Needless to say that critics find this control as in conflict with the idea of peoples' self-determination.

Step 4: Consultation and/or referendum

Once a statute is declared constitutional, one more step is necessary for achieving the AIOC status. For municipalities in transition, it is a referendum (Art. 54 I LMAD) and in the case of the TIOC, another consultation following its own rules and procedures is needed and succeeded by a referendum (Art. 54 III LMAD). In the referenda, the participation of IOC and non-IOC people must be guaranteed.

²⁰⁶ Cochabamba, 01.06.2016.

²⁰⁷ Sucre, 20.05.2016.

If the outcome of this process is positive, the formation of the AIOC follows the procedures laid out in the statute, yet is in this supervised by the OEP, which also accredits the authorities (Art. 55 I No 3 LMAD). In the case of the municipalities, the AIOC comes into being with the termination of the mandate of municipal authorities (Art. 55 I No 2 LMAD). Yet, one exception is made for those municipalities that entered the transition process in 2009 (Art. 55 II LMAD). Here, the rules established for the TIOC apply, and so, the municipal authorities do not finish their term, which has triggered conflicts and resistance in some places (see 8.4.4.).

8.4.2. State's and NGOs' support in the transition and beyond

The support for the transition from the state's enforcing mechanisms and from NGOs appears, overall, not to facilitate peoples' self-determination as imagined for a pluri-national state. As argued in 7.4.1., the AIOC appears within the central state autonomy regime as an annex and makes up a small part of the Ministry of Autonomies (Interview 1). Alongside this comes limited personnel and budget in the ministry and SIFDE (Interview 8).

Local NGOs have so far played important roles in the transition processes with the concrete configuration of actors and the case-specific nature of support²⁰⁸. NGO workers emphasise their limited resources and that their attempts to support all processes are inevitably uneven (Interviews 13,14). The NGOs' own agendas partially determine the processes selected for support: CEJIS, for example, decided to only become involved in TIOC-based transitions, since they do not see that the municipality-based AICO has potential for going beyond the municipal logic (Interview 14). Other NGO workers agree with this (Interviews 10,13,21).

Also, those working in the enforcing mechanisms do not appear neutral when offering support; several employees have experiences working with some groups or in certain areas. I found that Raqaypampa, the only TIOC-based AIOC, appeared to be a pet project of the former vice-minister of IOC (and Regional) Autonomies (now Director of IOC (and Regional) Autonomies), who had long-term experiences working with the people from Raqaypampa and, as he stated, already wrote his *licenciatura* thesis on Raqaypampa several years ago. In turn, an indigenous authority from a *marka* in Oruro, who wanted to advance the TIOC-based transformation, complained that he had tried to get support from the ministry, but they did not seem interested (Interview 91).

²⁰⁸ In the case of Charagua, no local actor contested that CIPCA played a crucial role in transition. Yet, their engagement in the process is contested: while local critics to the AIOC claim that they have written the statute (Interviews 108,111) and that these were friends with the indigenous authorities (Interview 113). One interviewee was convinced that they were sent by the government or at least receiving money from the MAS (Interview 116). Local supporters point out that they have no more than facilitated and enabled (Interviews 114,115,119).

For a former NGO worker, state and NGO employees tend to focus on working with local leaders – which appears convenient, yet is highly problematic especially when there is too limited knowledge of the local reality (Interview 25). A former consultant shared his impression that consultants and ministry staff demonstrated limited understanding and even disrespect, when claiming IOC authorities were incapable of abstract thinking, for example (Interview 80). Another NGO worker recalled that he often observed that if the indigenous people did not use the appropriate (political) language, or asked the wrong questions, they would be rebuked or threatened with no support (Interview 82). The former consultant recalled one occasion, where he was training in what he called the 'conventional way', meaning giving a presentation and sharing manuals (Interview 80). Since this did not work out, he then changed his methods:

eating sandwiches, having a drink, in poor conditions we planned, they understood better than me and gave me a lesson in how to manage their land, how to move forward, how they see education, their family²⁰⁹ (ibid.).

Another NGO worker agrees that state employees, consultants and NGO workers need to listen more to the indigenous peoples, trying to understand their specific context, their past and vision of the future – only then could processes move forward (Interview 69).

It is important to recognise that much of the mentioned points do not have to do with individuals unwilling to establish different relations or similar. Indeed, state and NGO employees working on the AIOC are often very dedicated and try their best to make it work (Interview 82). They are aware that the autonomy framework, as written down in the CPE and LMAD and other laws, implies many restrictions and also requires the AIOC authorities to follow these rules. While acknowledging that this goes against the idea of self-determination, ministry staff, NGO workers and consultants stress the need for indigenous people to *learn* the rules. A key challenge is identified in the management of resources (Interviews 74,99). For an interviewee,

[t]hey lack much knowledge and administrative management, what has happened with the fondo indígena²¹⁰, they were given resources and they wanted to spend the money as if it is of the pueblo, not subject to administration, control and they are in prison²¹¹ (Interview 34).

When I attended a CONAIOC assembly meeting in May 2016, where authorities from the different processes in transition were present, I observed how ministry staff and consultants tried to teach

²⁰⁹ Oruro, 14.04.2016.

²¹⁰ In 2005, the 'Indigenous Fund', officially called 'Fund for Development for IOC Communities', was created. With five percent of the IDH, it had the objective to finance projects that improve the development in rural areas. In late 2015, it was abolished after a corruption scandal became public. Several people, including union leaders and senators from the MAS-IPSP, were prosecuted and some were incarcerated. In Bolivia, this has been an issue of heated debates and investigations have not yet ended.

²¹¹ Santa Cruz, 02.06.2016.

these authorities the rules of the state-recognised autonomy. As in a classroom, presentations were given on different pieces of legislation to follow, for example, the Integral Planning, SPIE (see 7.5.2.). The audience was quiet most of the time, and most questions were asked by NGO workers.

My observations and (informal) conversions at the CONAIOC assembly indicate that the present IOC authorities indeed struggled to understand the rules they were required to follow. When speaking to official representatives from an advanced process, they revealed to me that they did not know about 'all the legal stuff', not even having seen the CPE before. Some days later, I attended a presentation on the AIOC transition in Raqaypampa at the FLACMA Congress and despite having three speakers – two authorities and the then vice-minister, it was the vice-minister, who spoke most of the time and answered all questions from the audience and the presentation slides came from the ministry.

Some of the present representatives at the CONAIOC assembly expressed disappointment since ministry staff and consultants did not properly explain the procedures and laws to them so they could understand. Some indigenous authorities thought initially that once an AIOC, they could be autonomous in any way they chose. There are increasing doubts that the government and ministry would support them. One group appeared intimidated by the rules and in this, seemed to have largely accepted that the state defines the AIOC proceedings and rules. They wished for more help and involvement, asking consultants or ministry staff, if they could come for a workshop or help them to write the plan they have to submit following the SPIE legislation. One even mentioned to me that (s)he was scared of ending up in prison if (s)he did something incorrectly.

Another group insisted that they have always been autonomous, hence, it would be wrong that ministry employees and consultants now tell them how to be autonomous. For them, the government had not understood what autonomy was about – one authority stood up while the then vice-minister spoke and cried out 'Why do you always put more obstacles into our way?'. While some authorities told me that they had lost hope that they could change their situation for the better with the AIOC, other authorities, who seemed well aware of the limitations of the AIOC, told me that it was best for them and other authorities to think strategically, meaning that to make progress, they had to move away from their current situation and try to push the boundaries. The AIOC is then just a step on the way towards their self-determination or *autonomía plena* (Interview 91).

8.4.3. Summarising the formal advancement

This table summarises the advancement of the AIOCs, which I describe in more detail in what follows:

	RESULTS 1 st referendum	RESULTS Control of statute by TCP ²¹²	RESULTS 2 nd referendum: Statute
TRANSITION FROM MUNICIPALITY TO AIOC			
Huacaya (Chuquisaca)	06.12.2009 53.7% YES 46.3% NO	0050/2014 ²¹³ 0094/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	09.07.2017 41.4 % YES 58.6 % NO
Machareti (Chuquisaca)	09.07.2017 51.3% YES 48.7% NO		
Mojocoya (Chuquisaca)	06.12.2009 88.3% YES 11.7% NO	0012/2013 0057/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.11.2016 40.64% YES 59.36% NO
Tarabuco (Chuquisaca)	06.12.2009 90.8% YES 9.2% NO	Rejected in the TCP admission commission	
Charazani (La Paz)	06.12.2009 86,6% YES 13.4% NO	No proposal presented	
Jesús de Machaca (La Paz)	06.12.2009 56.1% YES 43.9% NO	No proposal presented	
Curahuara de Carangas (Oruro)	06.12.2009 45.1% YES 54.9% NO		
Pampa Aullagas (Oruro)	06.12.2009 83.7% YES 16.3% NO	0020/2014 0028/2016 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	
San Pedro de Totora (Oruro)	06.12.2009 74.5% YES 25.5% NO	0009/2013 0029/2013 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 29,98% YES 70,04% NO
Chipaya (Oruro)	06.12.2009 91.7% YES 8.3% NO	0002/2014 0091/2015 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.11.2016 77.39% YES 22.61% NO
Salinas de Garci Mendoza (Oruro)	06.12.2009 75.1% YES 24.9% NO	No proposal presented	
Chayanta (Potosi)	06.12.2009 59.9% YES 40.1% NO	No proposal presented	
Charagua (Santa Cruz)	06.12.2009 55.7% YES 44.3% NO	0013/2013 0023/2014 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.09.2015 53,25% YES ²¹⁴ 46,75% NO
Gutiérrez (Santa Cruz)	20.11.2016 63.11% YES 36.89% NO		
TRANSITION FROM TIOC²¹⁵ TO AIOC			
Raqaypampa (Cochabamba)	Not applicable	0029/2015 0122/2015 DECLARED CONSTITUTIONAL	20.11.2016 91.78% YES 8.22% NO
Corque Marka (Oruro)	Not applicable	XXXX/2017	

Table 14: Formal advancement of AIOCs; sources: Georgetown University (2017) for 2009 referenda; OEP (2015a) for 2015 referenda; OEP (2016) for 2016 referenda; OEP (2017) for 2017 referenda.

²¹² The declarations can be found via [https://buscador.tcpbolivia.bo/\(S\(0cbwp0xznyrzefvelz4nixwx\)\)/WfrResoluciones.aspx](https://buscador.tcpbolivia.bo/(S(0cbwp0xznyrzefvelz4nixwx))/WfrResoluciones.aspx), accessed on the 30.05.2017.

²¹³ With the first declaration, the TCP returns the Statute with observation for modification and re-submission.

²¹⁴ September/October 2016: Elections; 08.01.2017: AIOC authorities assumes office.

²¹⁵ Some other TIOC, for example, Lomerio are interested and seem to work towards the Statute.

In late 2009, parallel to the referenda on departmental and regional autonomies and before the promulgation of the LMAD, twelve out of over 300 municipalities voted over entering the process of transitioning towards an AIOC. At this point, without more concrete legislation than the CPE, it was for many unclear how the autonomies would work and an NGO worker from Oruro recalled that it felt like the beginning of something radically new, which would go far beyond what the LMAD later established (Interview 82). Back then, in all except for one, Curahuara de Carangas (Oruro), the majority of votes were cast in favour of entering the process. Since then, two more municipalities have held referenda on entering the process in 2016 and 2017 and in both, Gutiérrez (Santa Cruz) and Macharetí (Chuquisaca), the majority opted for starting the conversion.

Four of the municipalities that entered the process in 2009 are inhabited by a majority of Aymara people, four of Quechua people, three processes are led by Guaraní peoples and in one, Chipaya, it is the Uros, the smallest highland group (Exeni Rodríguez, n.d.). Hence, the processes are largely concentrated in the highlands and valleys and on the larger groups of people, unsurprisingly as almost all municipalities with an indigenous majority are there. The extensive municipality of Charagua (Santa Cruz) alone is located in the lowlands.

In five municipalities, the second referendum on the approval of the statute took place. In three, San Pedro de Totora (Oruro), Mojocoya (Chuquisaca) and Huayaca (Chuquisaca), statutes were rejected and only in two, Charagua and Chipaya (Oruro), was the outcome positive. Of the remaining six municipalities, which entered the process in 2009, four did not submit a draft statute to the TCP, while one, Tarabuco (Chuquisaca), had its proposal rejected upon admission and no resubmission happened. Pampa Aullagas (Oruro), has a TCP approved statute, but no referendum was held.

At the time of writing, Raqaypampa (Cochabamba) alone, out of 180 titled TIOCs (Fundación Tierra, 2012b), has turned into an AIOC. Yet, in 2013, the Ministry of Autonomies was aware of eight TIOCs which had entered the process (in Aguilar Agramont, 2013) – as stated above, no initial referendum is needed, hence the initiation of the process is less visible than in the municipalities. During fieldwork, I came across some TIOCs like Corque Marka and Lomerio in which actors were interested in the transition – yet, it was not clear how the processes would unfold. At the time of writing, the process in Corque Marka appears to have advanced quickly and consultation and referendum on the statute are expected in 2018 (Clavijo, 2017).

8.4.4. Conflicts in the transitions

While I demonstrated throughout the previous and present chapters, how the figure of the AIOC and the transition processes are shaped and restricted by CPE, LMAD and other legislation and interaction with state employees and others, I balance this in the following by looking at the local dynamics. I

discuss four themes that came up during fieldwork which give some indications on the redirection of indigenous peoples' struggles. Even though some analysts and observers already claim that the AIOC failed (Interview 103), it appears more sensible to be patient (Interview 94). The AIOC transition is expected to trigger discussions in communities about identity and visions of the past, present and future, which cannot happen overnight (Interviews 1,82).

Mismatch of municipal and ancestral borders (highlands)

As previously mentioned, the municipality-based transition is more likely in the highlands and valleys, where the majority of the population identifies as indigenous. Such transition is said to have less potential for making a difference, since it is so closely built on the previous entity. In these transitions, a crucial challenge is the very common mismatch between the borders of municipalities and the ancestral territories of the indigenous. This limits the potential for peoples' self-determination and can trigger conflicts in the transition (Interview 3).

For example, in Salinas de Garci Mendoza (Oruro), people involved in the process agree that the municipal borders and structures led to tensions, which hindered the progress of the transition. The municipality of Salinas consists of seven municipal districts and five *markas*, each of which consist of a number of *ayllus* (Interviews 88,89). The majority of the population lives in the town of Salinas and usually, the elected mayor came from Salinas town and rural areas were under-represented if not ignored (Interviews 82,90).

When the option of the AIOC opened in 2009, members of the rural *markas* sought to join forces against the people from the town and the respective *marka*, to enhance their situation, meaning better representation and attendance to local needs. It was clear that they also had to negotiate with representatives from Salinas town, since the AIOC is required to be approved by a majority of the population (Interview 88). Yet, these negotiations were paralysed since no agreement could be found on how the AIOC should be run. There was agreement that a rotation principle was favoured and that the turn in office should be longer than a year, the usual mandate of the local indigenous authorities. The representatives of the rural *markas* argued that each *marka* should have the same right in taking the lead with one following the other. However the representatives from Salinas town claimed that they represented more people and that not all *markas* should be treated the same (Interviews 82,87,88,89). They would not accept that their *marka* only takes the lead every 10 or even 25 years and suggested that every second term would be theirs, while the other *markas* would rotate for the other terms.

At the time of my visit in April 2016, despite having started the process around seven years ago, no deliberative organ had been formed. A local authority pointed out that in his/her community, they

had started discussing transitioning towards an AIOC via the TIOC in their area. Yet, the process appeared bureaucratically more challenging; it was not clear which resources they would receive and they also feared getting into trouble with other *markas* and with Salinas town (Interview 88).

In Salinas' neighbouring municipality Pampa Aullagas such problems did not exist and the elaboration of the statute was a much smoother process. Here, the territory, which had initially been a municipal district of Salinas de Garci Mendoza, overlaps with only one *marka*, which made the transition much easier (Interview 82, 89). Also in Chipaya (Oruro), municipality and ancestral territory of the Uros overlap, and here, the elaboration of the statute was quicker, with less conflict, and approved in the 2016 referendum.

Leadership (and hydrocarbons in lowlands)

The existing relationship between community leaders, who play a crucial role in the transition, and the community seems crucial in shaping the transition processes. Particularly in places like Salinas and Charagua, remote and densely populated areas with limited internal infrastructure, and, in the case of Charagua, extensive territory, the relationship between authorities and the local population appears particularly vital. Some local analysts go as far as claiming that all *pueblos* are essentially characterised by authoritarian leadership and their customs are authoritarian (Interview 20). Hence, the recognition of norms and customs in the procedures of establishing and managing the AIOC would undermine democracy. Such overarching claims appear problematic.

Nevertheless, I found that the population living in rural communities often knows little about what an AIOC is and how the transition process is evolving, which seems similar to issues raised about the departmental autonomies (see 8.2.1.). For a former authority from Salinas, the rural population barely knows their rights as indigenous people (Interview 88).

While it needs to be acknowledged that the overall situation in the communities in Charagua is diverse (Bazoberry Chali, 2012), a local *capitana*²¹⁶ of a small community reported that information had been deliberately withheld from her, since the *Gran Capitán*, that is a high authority of the Guaraní, mistrusted her critical thinking (Interview 111). It is hard for the local *capitanes* to stay informed themselves since one cannot travel easily to meetings in Charagua town (ibid.). Similar observations were shared by NGO workers and other locals (Interviews 22,25,28,39,116). In the rural communities, I felt that people would be interested and engage more if they knew how and had someone to come and help them to understand (Interview 118). For an NGO worker, in Charagua 'you see leaders that

²¹⁶ The Guaraní people are today organised into *capitanías*, encompassing one or some communities. In the municipality of Charagua, there are four *Grandes capitanías*, which encompass several communities. Additionally, there are two urban centres, Charagua town and the nearby Charagua Station.

are removed from the bases. This is also not autonomy'²¹⁷ (Interview 39). Looking at the history²¹⁸, those tensions are not new. Already early on some *Grandes Capitanes* tried to 'modernise' quickly, imitating the whites, which led to tensions with the basis (Albó and Barrios Suvelza, 2006, p.19).

In Charagua, leadership and AIOC transition cannot be understood when ignoring hydrocarbons. Over the decades, the *capitanías* have acquired experience in dealing with hydrocarbon explorers and exploiters and handling compensation paid directly to them. As in other cases in the Bolivian lowlands and the Chaco, these payments are often said to have distorted the previously more responsive leadership (Interview 117). The funds are not managed transparently and are often misused, filling the pockets of the leaders (Interviews 39,61). After the death of Bonifacio Barrientos Iyambae or 'Grand Shadow', who had been not only a key figure in bringing the lowland peoples²¹⁹ together in the 1970s and 1980s, but had also managed to keep the Guaraní communities united²²⁰ (Interview 112), conflicts increased and escalated. His son, Bonifacio Chico, was unable to prevent constant battles over who manages the resources, especially in the Izozog, the remotest area of Charagua (Interviews 23,106). Not much of these resources reached the communal base and improved their situation, keeping poverty rates high and infrastructure limited.

The official *Gran Capitanes*²²¹, who were crucial in initiating and advancing the transition process, are now said to mostly work into their own pockets (Interviews 38,106,107,108,110,111), spend little time in communities. While I was on fieldwork, they lived in Santa Cruz and came to Charagua town for meetings and so on. Unlike the people I found in the communities, they possess big cars and showed off other luxury objects. They did do no more than promote their 'living well' in Santa Cruz, an interviewee said cynically (Interview 38). Also for me, it was easier to meet them in Santa Cruz than in the communities or in Charagua town.

Since so far not many of the compensation resources have reached the communities, a reasonable concern of locals and observers is that when the AIOC resources are controlled by the *capitanías*, they will not be invested in improving the lives of the local population (Interview 38). It appears likely that, at least in some areas, centralisation is reproduced at the local level, which contradicts the idea of self-determination of peoples (Interview 19).

²¹⁷ Tarija, 23.02.2016.

²¹⁸ Combès (2005) offers an in-depth historical study of those peoples now considered as Bolivian Guaraní.

²¹⁹ He played a vital role in the formation of the CIDOB.

²²⁰ In 1987, the APG, the 'Assembly of the *Pueblo Guaraní*', was founded (Caurey, 2012, p.16), bringing together Guaraní people in and beyond Charagua. It is today a key civil society organisation in areas inhabited by Guaraní people.

²²¹ Leadership is at least in parts of the Izozog contested, which is why there are often also unofficial *capitanes*. In recent times, the divisions are also seen as reflecting party lines (Interview 116).

Municipal authorities and redistribution as horizon

Resources interfere for additional reasons in the transition processes. One reason relates to the role of mayor and other municipal authorities, whose jobs would sooner or later disappear (Interview 89). The resources needed for the referenda come from the municipality and not the central state, meaning that the municipal authorities need to be willing to spend part of the budget (Interview 84). A lack of resources was the key reason that the referendum in Pampa Aullagas did not take place last year, despite having a statute that was approved by the TCP. Here, the mayor had opposed the process, probably because he wanted to continue his salaried role, which had started less than 18 months before.

In Salinas, the previous mayor who was in office between 2010 and 2015, had not supported the transition, which for locals helped to paralyse the process, yet, with the new supportive mayor, who also reserved a share of the budget for the process, a new attempt to push the process has started (Interview 91). In the case of Charagua, the mayor, who was elected in 2010, had supported the process. The 2015-authorities including council members and sub-mayors seemed aware of their temporary roles and a sub-mayor even agreed not to receive his salary, since all the money had been spent on the referendum (Interviews 117,119).

In the case of potential TIOC, an additional challenge arises in the transition, since it affects borders and ceases to belong to one or more municipalities. Hence, the municipalities lose inhabitants, territory and therefore, resources, which then go to the TIOC, which can trigger resistance from the municipal authorities since they do not wish to lose control over resources and the people from in the municipal capital more generally.

In all cases, I studied in some detail, (re-)distribution of economic resources appeared to be a major theme in the transition. Consultants with long-term experience of working with indigenous peoples, and who work closely with the transition process even find that the AIOC revolves fundamentally around economic resources (Interviews 8,25,28,99).

As pointed out above, in some cases the AIOC has also been initiated by authorities representing rural areas in the municipality, who have felt neglected by the municipal authorities. This can be seen in Salinas (see above) and is also a crucial aspect of the project in Charagua. Here, in the four districts or *capitanías*, those in favour of the AIOC often state that investment was so far mainly focused on urban centres and that the AIOC is concerned with bringing resources to where they are urgently needed. The transition principally means a decentralisation of power and resources within the municipality (Interview 25). With the AIOC, resources are decentralised to these six entities. For a municipal authority supporting the AIOC, this suggests

(...) one thought: once we managed to achieve all which is the autonomy, that each district could manage their own resources, without much bureaucracy and without dependence on other levels²²² (Interview 116).

The importance of resources received from the state is in tension with the idea of self-determination/autonomy. For an interviewee, 'they say: "We want to be autonomous and that they send us money", but if you are autonomous, this means that you bring money yourself, no?'²²³ (Interview 39). Historically, the autonomy of indigenous peoples consisted in surviving on their own, without receiving anything from the state (Interview 88). It hence appears that through the state-recognised AIOC, the rule of money is deepened further.

Conflicts with world views and ways of life

An important conflict in the transition processes in Oruro, but according to local researchers is also relevant in Chuquisaca, has emerged between those living in rural communities and those members of the community who spend most of their time in cities, called residents (Interviews 82,84,87,91). While in 1960, slightly over 36 per cent of the Bolivian population lived in urban areas, in 2016, it was 68 per cent (World Bank, 2017). Often the younger generation has moved from the rural community to the city, enhancing job prospects, obtaining better formal education for their children and living a 'modern' life. This leaves many rural communities inhabited mainly by older people and little children. Yet, those who move to the city, remain part of the community, including the obtaining of social functions and the obligation to serve as authority²²⁴, when it is their turn (Interviews 84,87). Remaining part of the community means that they retain their right of access to land and, for example, that they also vote there, meaning that they are registered in the village – directing resources from the 1994 Public Participation Law to the rural community (Interviews 84,88). Usually, they strongly identify with their community, coming for festive activities, among others.

The first generation of those who received their formal education, including university degrees in the city are now young adults. They often have a distinct perspective on life and of how things should be in contrast to those who have spent their entire life in the community (Interview 84). Those who remained in the communities often claim that the others are just interested in what is good for themselves and their family and lack civic or regional consciousness (Interview 77). A common argument of those spending most of their life in towns is that the most capable, for them meaning educated, people should be in influential positions rather than relying on a system of taking turns. The

²²² Charagua, 13.05.2016.

²²³ Tarija, 23.02.2016.

²²⁴ Obligations can also be transferred to someone else, but this is often not welcomed in the communities (Interview 88).

Aymara authorities only fulfil their function for one year, yet, for the AIOC, this is insufficient, since not enough can be achieved in one year.

Conversely, elderly people living in the communities argue that the AIOC runs the risk of corruption (Interview 87). Key to this is that the role of the indigenous authorities is incompatible with the state structure and could be undermined (Interview 88). An indigenous former authority from Salinas, who has also worked in the GAD Oruro, explains,

The spirit and strength of the indigenous authorities [is that] they serve the community, no? If you lose this spirit of serving the community and you only think of the pay, the salary or the benefits that you can get from the administration of economic resources, it distorts the structure of the indigenous authorities²²⁵ (Interview 84).

In the municipality, there is the risk that certain groups create a monopoly, holding power for a longer time (ibid.).

For residents, when the AIOC authorities are elected according to customs, this signifies a return to a situation, where women are discriminated against and power is only distributed between a few male members of a family – 'we do not want to live again in a monarchy as we did in the Aymara and Inca Empires' (Interview 74). Their interest in changing the customs is that under those old rules they have little chance to obtain influential posts at a young age, despite being more educated if they are not spending much time in the community. Yet, in the AIOC Chipaya, among the first authorities accredited in mid-2017, are a 20-year and 22-year old, which can be seen as a tentative indication that the young generation is not systematically excluded (El Diario, 2017).

In Charagua, such clashes were not very apparent to me. Most people I encountered – authorities or other members of communities – generally expressed modern visions of progress or development, and were concerned with improving job prospects, healthcare, education, infrastructure and so on (Interviews 112,113,114). Living well for them meant ending poverty. Only some people who had been part of the deliberative organ, shared with me that the restoration of tradition lay at the heart of the transition. For those opposed to the process, this was no more than discourse that they picked up from an NGO and the government they supported and from which they might have obtained some benefits (Interviews 19, 116). In long conversations²²⁶ with a senior former authority from a rural community in the Izozog, he told me about a very different 'living well', a very different community life, characterised by mutual respect and support, and respect for Mother Earth. Over the past two to three decades, he observed drastic change and expressed deep concern about the behaviour of

²²⁵ Oruro, 20.04.2016.

²²⁶ I spent some days in the local health post in Charagua and he was there as company of his wife.

leaders, the values of the younger generation, who seemed to forget more and more where they come from.

8.5. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide insights into how the pluri-national autonomy regime has unfolded beyond the central state. Overall, the processes do not seem to develop as many of those involved in the struggles for departmental, regional and indigenous autonomy had hoped, which might not come as a surprise given my findings in previous chapters.

Looking at the departmental level, particularly in the highlands, where there had not been prominent demands for departmental autonomy, the regime does not seem – as the government recently claimed – consolidated, as indicated by the missing statutes, but also in the relationship between assembly and governor, among others. Additionally, as visible in the legislative activities, so far the departmental ETAs do not (yet) appear to properly exercise their given competences. While much of this seems to have to do with a lack of experience of officials and tight budgets, it also remains questionable how far this process can deepen given the strong presence of the MAS-IPSP in the highlands in particular. Yet, in oppositional lowland departments, the incorporation of the autonomies into the CPE is perceived as a massive success and progress. Still, it is only a struggle in the battle that continues, now at least partly inside the state – as visible in the fiscal pact (see 7.5.3.). Looking beyond the state, in some instances, autonomy has been used by local actors to bring attention to their local situation and pressure the government.

The first and only regional autonomy, the Gran Chaco province, is more restricted than the other types of autonomies and offers no more than a space for joint planning. The Gran Chaco regional autonomy appears closely associated with the consolidation of hydrocarbon *regalías*, while there seems little capacity/willingness for going beyond the municipal logic and it is questionable if the current sense of unity will lead to more sustainable development than in the previous years of the resource boom. As in the case of departmental autonomies, some local actors from rural resource-rich areas use the regional autonomy banner to draw attention to their situation, expressing their concerns about centralisation at the departmental level, particularly under an opposition governor.

Finally, the AIOC, which translated the demand for indigenous peoples' self-determination into state matter, is often seen as the key pillar of the new pluri-national state. Apart from being subordinated to the state managers' agenda of facilitating profitable accumulation, it is largely subordinated to a modern character of the state, seen in its apparently universal laws and involvement of enforcing mechanisms. This has not just to do with the lack of government support, but shows how the pluri-national state is still a modality of the inherently modern/colonial state form. Looking at the struggles,

the cases of transition indicate how modern state borders and mindsets of those, who have become more closely included into the modern/colonial state and life (through more education, among others) as well as concerns with resources have influenced the processes in ways that seem at odds with the idea of peoples' self-determination.

This scenario appears to have led to a fragmentation of earlier struggles, as it triggers looking at local scenarios and confront arising challenges. For those who wanted autonomy, an additional challenge arises from the fact that formally, autonomy and self-determination 'really for all' became state-recognised – what should one then demand?

Chapter 9. Discussions

9.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I return to key aspects of the debates in the literature I reviewed throughout Chapters 2-4 and re-engage with them in view of the collected data and the conducted analysis. This discussion is organised around five themes, which refer to particular strands of literature. These five themes are addressed in one subsection each; they partly overlap, but are not all closely connected.

First, I restate the importance of moving beyond thinking about the pluri-national state through regime-centred approaches or the notions of post-neoliberalism, neo-developmentalism and neo-extractivism, as these tend to lead to simplistic interpretations that are of limited use for understanding the pluri-national experiment in Bolivia (9.2.). This leads me to highlight that relational approaches are generally more promising, but need to take into account the implication of colonial history (9.3.). For this, the 'de-colonial option' offers key insights. I thirdly re-engage with the debates on autonomy and show why and how debates should be opened up (9.4.). I argue that it is of limited use to see autonomy as an option that can be chosen from a list of options or a public choice. The search for autonomy – in which autonomy can have different meanings – and their translation into and by the state offers more insights. Fourthly – and reconsidering methodological aspects – I recapitulate the proposed operationalisation of the capitalist/colonial state and reflect on the benefits of considering struggles for, against and in the pluri-national state (9.5.). Finally, I pose the question of whether and how far the Pluri-national State of Bolivia is truly pluri-national (9.6.). Even though pluri-nationality has a strong normative dimension implying the idea of a world in which different worlds coexist, when discussing the pluri-national state in practice, its development should be seen as the object and result of historic-materialist domestic struggles and international pressures.

9.2. Moving beyond regime and post-neoliberalism

This analysis has shown that the regime is important when wanting to make sense of the pluri-national experiment. It became apparent that when exercising power, the MAS-IPSP government partly acts against the constitutional norms and has a great deal of influence over rule-making and (parts of) the enforcing mechanisms. Recently, Morales even claimed that the separation of powers is part of the North-American doctrine that has been used to bring democratic governments to fall (Trigo, 2017). Some practices reveal that MAS-IPSP's government power is not solely exercised within the political sphere. Against this background, it is reasonable to question – as several scholars do – how far the MAS-IPSP government is democratic or authoritarian.

However, when the pluri-national scenario is understood solely in terms of the political regime, a problem emerges, that is similar to Marx' description at the beginning of *Kapital*: His critique of

political economy showed how Smith and Ricardo treated and conceptualised value as a purely economic category, that is as an not connected with the inner nature of commodities (Marx, 1872 [2011], pp.88-95). By this, they fail to properly understand those categories.

In a similar vein, regime-centred approaches perceive the regime as an object, which can be classified as totalitarian, authoritarian or democratic. These scholars start, with the 'living whole, the population (...) etc.; they always end, however, in such a way that they discover a few determining, abstract, universal relationships (...) through analysis' (Marx, 1857 [1975], p.72). What does it say about pluri-national Bolivia if we label the regime as democratic/authoritarian? Meta-concepts like the above are not given and if we take them for granted, we do not see they have emerged and developed in a specific context with the work of certain people. The problem is neither taking the concrete as a starting point (what else could be that starting point?) nor abstracting from it. The problem is that this abstraction is the end point, which leaves them unable to understand the inner nature of the present regime. Marx instead suggests that

[i]f I begin with population, then that would be a chaotic conception of the whole, and through closer determination I would come analytically to increasingly simpler concept; from the conceptualised concrete to more and more tenuous abstraction, until I arrived at the simplest determinations. From there the journey would be taken up again in reverse until I finally arrived again at a population, this time, however not as a chaotic conception of a whole, but as a rich totality of many determinations and relationships (Marx, 1857 [1975], p.72).

The real abstraction of the pluri-national state as 'mediation in motion' has shown the importance of the way the MAS-IPSP exercises power, yet, it does so by embedding it in the past struggles that have produced it and the present struggles that continue to shape it.

In debates on 'post-neoliberalism', a similar problem arises when this notion is treated as an 'adjective' for the government that specifies the regimes, defined by factors like specific adopted policies or the use of a certain rhetoric. Notions of 'neo-developmentalism' and 'neo-extractivism' can run the same risk when used as a label to describe a (aspired) changed role of the state or similar. What do we know about Bolivia or another state if we classify it as post-neoliberal, neo-developmental or neo-extractivist? The limitations of the concepts become particularly apparent considering the explanatory power for the contradictions found in the Bolivian state transformation.

One could argue that autonomy as decentralisation resonates more with neoliberal thinking of an efficient state, than autonomy as self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo* and peoples. If we were to accept that post-neoliberalism is about rejecting and moving beyond neoliberalism, both self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo* and peoples could be seen also as post-neoliberal while decentralisation less so. Nevertheless, all three visions of autonomy are present in the state and

unlikely to disappear and so pluri-national Bolivia appears neoliberal and post-neoliberal at the same time.

In addition, the different ideas of autonomy found in the pluri-national state are in tension with one another in the pluri-national experiment. With the notion of the 'stronger state', the literature on post-neoliberalism, neo-developmentalism or neo-extractivism seems to pay more attention to the self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo* than to decentralisation and self-determination of peoples. By this, they run the risk of not seeing or adequately incorporating the colonial features in state transformation.

Caution is also required when thinking of post-neoliberalism as a utopian project. By using neoliberalism as a reference point, it is questionable how this can shed light on ideas for a *different* state. The rise of the pluri-national idea and state implies not only a rejection of and an attempt to move beyond neoliberalism, but also refers to the colonial and republican/nationalist experience.

More generally, the Bolivian experiment understates the urgency of going beyond wishful thinking that abstracts utopia from the relations that constitute it. In the current scenario, in which frustration is widespread among those who hoped for a *different* state and important challenges have arisen, it is crucial to focus on the here and now. There is a need for what Bloch (1959) calls 'concrete utopia', that is not about yearning to receive without much effort, but 'reaches forward to a real possible future'.

9.3. Taking coloniality seriously

Few scholars studying Bolivia would disagree with Farthing and Kohl in that '[o]f course, the indigenous Americas are not only shaped by the short memory of neoliberalism but also by the long memory of five hundred years of colonialism' (Farthing and Kohl, 2014, p.157). This indicates that there might be a problem with prominent capital relational approaches to the state, since they offer limited/ing perspectives on how the colonial experience has shaped and continues to shape Bolivian state and society. Following such relational thinking, indigenous people have an underprivileged position in society that has become more rigid over time and enshrined in the state and its institutions. Yet, it also implies that if the indigenous could improve their position, they could achieve that the state represents them properly and incorporates their demands as desired. Yet, is this feasible? I think such thinking is misleading.

The capital relation is without doubt a relation of domination. Yet, for indigenous people, domination means something more than exploitation of wage labour. Among others, Guevara's experience in Bolivia and the emergence of and debates within the *Katarista* movement demonstrated the short-

sightedness of treating – as a great deal of Latin American Marxists did – indigenous people as peasants. Such *campesinación* treats people as relating to land as something they work, which implies being blind to alternatives and assimilating them to the modern universe facilitated by the state enforcing of rules of money and law. By this, the cry for a *different*, pluri-national state, which is an ontological struggle against this universe, cannot be grasped.

Yet, this specificity of indigenous peoples' struggles does not mean that these should be simply viewed through the lens of coloniality, implying that they are outside capital or unable to be understood in the context of Western thought, as argued by some post-colonial scholars. Capital is a global relation of domination which, following Chibber (2013), has a universalising, yet no homogenising tendency. Dinerstein (2015) suggests that indigenous people have been subsumed by capital, but in a different way, that is, by being excluded. Looking at the emergence and development of the state form, throughout most of Bolivian history, indigenous people remained formally excluded from citizenship. Yet, they were – when needed – responsible for a large share of state budget and made up the majority of the labour force in mines and fields. While this facilitated the breakthrough of industrial capitalism in the West, the relations of production in Bolivia were significantly shaped by colonial relations. In this, the *pluriverse* was subordinated as much as necessary for profitable accumulation. Yet, this subordination has not been complete, which is also indicated by the continued resistance of indigenous.

In the pluri-national state, which prominently incorporated the indigenous peoples' quest for self-determination, it became apparent that state-recognised AIOC largely means a deepening of enforcement of rules of money and law as far as it is necessary for facilitating accumulation. The space for AIOC largely seems to have been limited to the extent that it does not interfere with the agenda predominantly pushed by the MAS-IPSP government, serving to sustain high growth rates under the banner of self-determination of the *pueblo*. Also in the enforcing mechanisms limited change occurred, for example, in interaction with peoples.

This research highlights the need for addressing the dominant capital relational approaches in an attempt to denaturalise capitalist/colonial society and state and escape entrapment in the modern/capitalist universe. For this, the 'de-colonial option' provides key insights into how the state reproduces social hierarchies, among others. The importance of this extends beyond the specific case of indigenous people and their resistance, since a demystifying analysis of the status quo and the imagination of concrete alternatives to the capitalist/colonial society is badly needed in challenging times – from climate and the so-called refugee crisis, among others. In this, scholars and activists in the West and elsewhere can learn from the indigenous peoples' knowledges and experiences.

9.4. On stimulating debates on autonomy

While I have not reviewed much of the large body of academic literature on autonomy, this study has shown the importance of introducing a substantial historical-materialist perspective to such debates. In Bolivia, autonomy quests have referred to distinct projects, it is not always a matter of emancipation as understood in most contexts. In the Spanish-speaking context autonomy can also refer to a type of state organisation, in which some entities are autonomous from the central state. This is fundamentally about obtaining more leverage within the state against the central state and not a project of seeking emancipation/liberation from the state. In Bolivia, these struggles were at some points underpinned by powerful economic actors, seeking to preserve their influence and potential for profits. This should lead to reopening debates on autonomous projects, as these often refer to autonomy from capital, state or development (Böhm *et al.*, 2010). At the same time, indigenous struggle for autonomy, in which emancipation necessarily refers a decolonising project, underpins suggestions raised in the aftermath of the Zapatistas uprising, that coloniality and decolonisation should be taken more seriously when discussing about autonomy more generally.

Furthermore, this study emphasised the contradictory nature of struggles for autonomy that demand recognition or resources from the state or even push for changing the state altogether, yet also want to be left alone by the state. This highlights the need to consider what happens when demands for autonomy are mediated by the state. The AIOC, as key pillar of the pluri-national that translates the demand for peoples' self-determination, shows the impossibility of state-recognised self-determination implying autonomy from capital, state and development. As part of the 'mediation in motion', it cannot be autonomous from the state and since the state is deeply capitalist/colonial, it is incapable of seriously moving beyond notions of capitalist development. In this, I follow Böhm *et al.*, who suggest that 'autonomy can never be completely fulfilled, as capital, the state and discourses of development continuously attempt to capture the idea of autonomy to make it work for their own purposes' (Böhm *et al.*, 2010).

The impossibility of state-recognised autonomy as moving beyond the universalising rules of money and law also means the impossibility of decolonising the state, even if the government appoints a Vice-Minister of Decolonisation, as happened in Bolivia. As long as capitalist/colonial society exists, an *other* state is impossible and it is, as Holloway (2005) points out, indeed not the right starting point for bringing about such aspired revolutionary change.

How the state captures ideas related to the *different* state, can be seen with the example of the notion *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir*— that has been espoused by the pluri-national state and used for different purposes. It was presented as an alternative development that stresses the self-determination of the

pueblo. Yet, this has little connection with its original idea, which refers more to an alternative to development (Huanacuni Mamani, 2010; Solón, 2016).

The MAS-IPSP strategy also raises questions on who the *pueblo* is and who defines what self-determination means for the *pueblo* – and where the indigenous peoples are in this. The translation of the demands for the *pueblo's* self-determination, which is high up on the MAS-IPSP agenda does not aim – at least in the short-term – to move beyond capital and (capitalist) development in concrete policies and so on. If self-determination of the *pueblo* is framed as greater independence from the US and financial institutions it might be attainable, yet it might also lead to new dependencies.

9.5. Operationalising the capitalist/colonial state and unpacking 'struggles' in the form-analysis

This research has shown the importance of approaching the pluri-national state of Bolivia with a set of lenses that make the capitalist and colonial colouring of the state visible. With this, I agree with the *comuna* scholars, who saw a dual crisis in the early 2000s, that is a crisis of the neoliberal (capitalist) and a crisis of the colonial state. I also follow them in stressing the importance of paying attention to the emergence and development of the state, which I propose to see as a 'mediation in motion', to better represent its temporarily specific and evolving character. With the developed framework, I showed a way of operationalising such thinking into a historical-material study of the pluri-national state.

Both, CSE/Open Marxists and de-colonial scholars are concerned with denaturalising the state and capitalist/colonial society. This joint line of attack creates space to integrate CSE/Open Marxism and the 'de-colonial option' into one framework. While it is sometimes argued that Marxism and post-colonial studies are incompatible since they have different starting points, the rise of capitalism and the point of Conquest, in my opinion, this does not apply to CSE/Open Marxism and the 'de-colonial option'. CSE/Open Marxists emphasise the social relations of production, which were of course not inexistent before the spread of capitalism. For de-colonial scholars, who identify the Conquest as a point that was necessary for the rise of the Western modern civilizational project, which claims ego-less universality for itself and makes other epistemologies and ways of life invisible and facilitated the expansion of capital. I proposed that the notion of form can help when combining the two in one framework – while drawing on CSE/Open Marxist notion, I then stretched it, following the suggestion of scholars like Fanon (1983).

CSE/Open Marxism is open for seeing the unevenness in capitalist development around the world. As capital is a global relation, states are fragments or 'forms of the global totality of social relation' that appear to be territorially and politically autonomous (Holloway, cited by Dinerstein, 2017). Yet, they

are not autonomous, since states are interlocked through the exchange rate mechanism into a 'hierarchy of price systems' (Burnham, cited by Bieler, 2006, p.75). This capital relation is not a homogenous one – but it can even promote difference if this facilitates accumulation. I suggested that the 'de-colonial option' offers crucial insights into how the relations in the formerly colonised parts of the world have unfolded in ways that are different from other places.

For the task of denaturalising the capitalist/colonial state, it is important to explore, determine and unpack the different components of the form. Otherwise, it cannot be properly conceptualised and ultimately remains a 'box' or a 'thing' with a rather mysterious content. Precisely this had been a weakness in the work of the (radical) *dependistas*, who pointed to the importance of external pressures and domestic struggles, but failed to show how these are mediated. Yet, when referring to the different components, it might appear that their existence is taken for granted, which would work towards their naturalisation, the opposite of what I aim to do. I proposed to understand them as part of the universalising tendency of capital, which finds expression at the political level of the political form of the global relations of production. This does not mean that the relations that underpin the 'mediation in motion' are the same in different places and at different times.

The developed framework and conducted form-analysis indicate the richness of perceiving the state as result and object of struggles, which allows unpacking the notion of 'struggles'. Looking at the Pluri-national State of Bolivia as a result of struggles makes the struggles for and against the pluri-national state idea visible, which predate the 2009 Constitution. Since the pluri-national idea is closely tied to self-determination of peoples, the struggles for indigenous autonomy are crucial in the struggles for this *other* state, those who demanded a more deepened decentralisation, were not in favour of the pluri-national state idea. The struggles that expression in the rise of MAS, in which the pluri-national state idea was picked up, illustrate how the pluri-national idea has been used in different ways. As demonstrated in Chapter 5 and 6, a historical-material analysis is crucial for understanding how these struggles emerged, unfolded, were mediated and became *informed* in the 2009 Constitution.

Yet, the Open Marxist/de-colonial perspective also allows seeing the Pluri-national State of Bolivia as an object of struggles. This involves, firstly, struggles within the pluri-national state, partly as a result of the incorporations of different demands into the state. Hence, some of the struggles between government and actors or movements outside the state have become internalised. In Chapter 7 and 8, I demonstrated how tensions within the Bolivian states have increased, which becomes, for example, apparent in the (Vice-)Ministry of Autonomies but also between different ETAs. Secondly, the pluri-national state is – like earlier modalities – an object of struggles from the outside. Such struggles against the pluri-national state are also the redirected continuation of earlier struggles for

and against the pluri-national idea. In this redirection, triggered by the pluri-national experience, voices for going beyond the pluri-national state become louder in parts of the indigenous movements. Yet, others continue to reject the pluri-national idea of the *other* state altogether.

Taken together, these categories of struggles for, against, within and beyond the state, have shown to be very helpful for unpacking the multifaceted and evolving struggles in the Bolivian state transformation and enable grasping continuity and change in state and struggles. Such unpacking of struggles has the potential to also offer insights into other processes of state transformation.

9.6. How 'pluri' is the Pluri-national State of Bolivia?

Compared to previous political modalities, the pluri-national modality brought important changes which should not be underestimated. The representation of the indigenous people in the state has increased and with the pluri-national idea, IOC jurisdiction and AIOC, key demands from some indigenous groups turned into state matter. These have, however weakly, altered the state components and led to internal changes. Following this study, the AIOC and vision of peoples' self-determination more generally has not been completely subsumed to other logics of autonomy or become invisible, which might be considered 'cracks' in the state form (Holloway, 2010).

While acknowledging that the state has become more plural, my argument is that the decolonisation of the state is improbable given that its political form is inherently capitalist and colonial. What does this mean for the pluri-national state and its normative dimension? Analysing it as result and object of struggles, the pluri-national state does not resemble the radical idea of a *different* state. Instead, it continues to be a capitalist/colonial state, which predominantly enforces the rules of money and law that facilitate profitable accumulation. The practical limitations of the imagined pluri-national state are also observable in that the different nations do not appear on equal footing, as imagined for a pluri-national state. This could be seen already in the Unity Pact and constituent assembly, as argued by Garcés (2011) and confirmed in my study. The TIPNIS conflict and the opening of natural parks, among others, support Canessa's point that highland peoples are more privileged in the pluri-national state than the lowland peoples (Canessa, 2014).

This study revealed contradictory tendencies found inside the pluri-national state, and suggested that these tensions cannot be reconciled by the state; they are not creative tensions in the consolidation of the pluri-national state (García Linera, 2011a). For an 'intellectual of the state' working on the establishment of hegemony from the state, it makes sense to adopt a perspective on the state that can unite society (Solón, 2016, pp.56-57). Yet, such view is severely limited – since the state has so far never shown itself capable of uniting all Bolivians in their diversity and also in pluri-national state, fragmentation (and demobilisation) instead of unification of the pueblo appears to take place.

It is much more convincing to see the state, pluri-national or not, as inherently contradictory. With the mediation of demands pushed by social struggles which sometimes involve austere reorganisation of the state, some tensions appear to be solved. Yet, as derivationists and CSE/Open Marxist highlight, accumulation is always contradictory – and there seem to be no more than ‘temporary fixes’, as Harvey (2011) calls it. If the state is the political form of the social relations of capital, this applies to some extent to the state, too. At the same time, facilitating the seemingly universal rules of money and law imply the impossibility of mediating the ontological dimensions of indigenous peoples’ quests appropriately. Such universalising feature of the state renders the resolution of the present tensions impossible.

Chapter 10. Conclusion

10.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I first review the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1 and summarise the key findings by answering my original research questions. Building on this, I elaborate on the key contributions made within this thesis. Then I engage with limitations of the study and potential further research.

10.2. Summary of research objectives

This thesis began with the suggestion that taking the state seriously allows deep insights into the contradictory tendencies several researchers previously identified in the pluri-national experiments (see 1.1.). Consequently, the first objective of this thesis was to identify an approach to the state that is capable of explaining its evolving and apparent contradictory tendencies and the specificity of the pluri-national state idea (Chapters 2-4). Since achieving this first objective led to designing a new epistemological-theoretical framework, a second objective was to work out the methodological implications of the approach (4.4.). The next research objective was to apply the developed approach to a real-world phenomenon, the first pluri-national state: Bolivia (Chapters 5-8). The final objective was to reflect upon the usefulness of thinking of transformations beyond Bolivia (and the state), involving rethinking the link between empirical findings and the epistemological-theoretical and methodological aspects of the study and reflecting on further implications (Chapters 9-10).

10.3. Responding to the research questions: main findings

- ❖ *Research question 1a: How has the state in Latin America in general and in Bolivia in particular been approached in recent studies?*

Throughout the Chapters 2 and 3, I argued that most of the reviewed perspectives on the Latin American and Bolivian states fail to offer a concept of the state that reflects its evolving and contradictory character and is sensitive to the specificity of the pluri-national state. While approaches perceiving the state as a 'thing' fail to see its transitory nature which is full of tensions, many current relational accounts and Marxist perspectives from Latin America have failed to understand or identify the colonial underpinning of the state. Yet, this colonial colouring of the state is critical in any serious analysis of the pluri-national idea and state. De-colonial thought offers important insights into the colonial aspect of the state and in rethinking history; yet, this sometimes runs the risk of binary thinking and a problematic understanding of capitalism.

The Bolivian *comuna* thinkers are strong in making sense of the general (capitalist) and specific (colonial) state crises in the early 21st century. However, they did not develop a coherent theorisation

of the state that helps to understand its transformation. As self-proclaimed 'collective intellectual', García Linera more recently diminishes the deep-seated contradictions when speaking of 'creative tensions' in the consolidation of the pluri-national state (García Linera, 2011a). Yet, his assumption on the state as unifying actor appears particularly problematic. Tapia Mealla offers a more critical stance on the process and his argument for moving the state out of the spotlight is comprehensible (Tapia Mealla, 2014). Yet, this should not imply abandoning the category of the state.

❖ *Research questions 1b: How far can a notion of 'form'/'mediation in motion' provide an alternative that better reflects the state's evolving and contradictory character? Does the notion need to be decolonised and if so, (how) is this possible?*

In Chapter 4, I proposed an epistemological-theoretical framework for approaching the state that enables one to see its contradictory and evolving character. For this, I drew on the CSE/Open Marxist notion of 'form', which depicted the state as a *historically specific political form of the social relations of capital*. The CSE/Open Marxist approach involves looking at the world in terms of struggles; the state is the political form that these struggles take. This form mediates domestic/national and external/international struggles and pressures. To emphasise its transitory nature as both a result of past and object of present struggles, I proposed perceiving it as a 'mediation in motion'.

The CSE/Open Marxist notion of struggle is wider than in some classic Marxist perspectives, which see struggle as a confrontation between working class and bourgeoisie (in the West) as it 'cover[s] a huge range of different activities', which are – like capitalist society – inherently contradictory (Holloway, 2010, pp.38; 63-64). Dinerstein's notion of 'sub-sumption by exclusion' (Dinerstein, 2015) offers a way of seeing indigenous people as part of the capital relation while still pointing to the specificity of how they are subsumed, which also shapes their struggles. Hence, I found that the critique from post-colonial sources identifying Marxism as misleading in formerly colonised places as not generally applicable.

With its emphasis on struggles, it is possible to incorporate the specific indigenous struggles for a *different* state, which is of crucial importance for the 'de-colonial option'. Such scholars reject those approaches that naturalise and/or legitimate the existence and action of the state and hence not necessarily CSE/Open Marxism. I suggested that their concern with denaturalising the apparent 'universal' is compatible with the CSE/Open Marxist epistemological underpinning. Yet, to make the decolonising agenda more explicit, the approach should be refined with de-colonial thought or, 'stretched' as suggested by Fanon (1983). Nevertheless, this does not necessarily lead to a decolonised approach. This question of the overall possibility of decolonisation of CSE/Open Marxism requires further research.

❖ *Research question 2: What are methodological implications of understanding the state as a 'form'/'mediation in motion'?*

When approaching the state as a 'mediation in motion', it is abstracted *in* and not *from* society; the starting point for the study is not the state itself, but struggles. In order to understand the pluri-national state, which partly emerged out of previous struggles that normatively rest on the rejection of the colonial and nation state, it is valuable indeed to develop an historical-materialist perspective on the 'mediation in motion' in Bolivia.

Yet, given the limited scope of this study, a specific set of struggles is chosen and within this thesis I argue that struggles for autonomy are a particularly promising entry point. This is because contradictions of struggles against and beyond but still *in* the state (form) appear particularly palpable and it allows the incorporation of the specific indigenous struggles for an *other* state. In other words, it hence becomes also possible to grasp struggles for and against the pluri-national idea, which predate the pluri-national modality and to unpack struggles in, against, for and beyond the pluri-national state/idea in the pluri-national scenario.

Neither CSE/Open Marxist form-analysis nor de-colonial thought are associated with a specific set of methods for collecting and analysing data and I argued that tools should be used that best help to explain the processes underpinning the *transformation*. For embedding the present state in past struggles (Chapter 5), I suggested working with a periodisation of the state form into different political modalities. These express the changing form at the political level. While this can run the risk of seemingly naturalising the state or even assuming a pre-determined logic, I argued that it facilitates a consistent analysis.

In addition, I unpacked the state form into different (central state) components (basis, rules, enforcing mechanisms, government) that appear universal in the sense that they are (so far) found in every state form. Not only does this generally help with a further demystification, it also serves to shed light on where the contradictory tendencies are located at a particular moment in time and how tensions in and between the components unfold.

I sought to pay special attention to decolonising the research methodology, meaning, among other factors, including other alternative knowledges. Yet, given the focus of this study, it was not possible to work with indigenous methodologies (see 4.4.3 and 4.4.4.). Also because of this, I do not offer a decolonised study of the state, but push towards decolonising thinking about the state and CSE/Open Marxism.

- ❖ *Research question 3: What light does state theorisation, based on the idea of 'form' and 'mediation in motion', shed on state transformation in Bolivia in general and in particular, how transformational is the introduction of the pluri-national state in Bolivia likely to be?*

The analysis demonstrated how since the beginning, the Bolivian state has been marked by tensions, which were – when required – temporarily addressed through transformation but never resolved. I showed how the evolution of 'mediation in motion' has been pushed by domestic struggles and external pressures, often pushing state managers to seek the most profitable accumulation. When the state is a form of the social relations of capital that is deeply colonial, since it facilitates and enforces the rules of money and law, one cannot move beyond capitalism and/or coloniality through the state, whether called pluri-national or not. While struggles for a *different* state are expressed at the political level of the pluri-national state, there is continuity in the form.

When studying the pluri-national state transformation in more detail and unpacking different strands of struggles for autonomy – some closely tied to, other rejecting the pluri-national idea – and their translation into and through the new political modality, the capitalist and colonial colouring of the mediation became apparent. In the cases of departmental and regional autonomy as well as the struggles for self-determination of the Bolivia *pueblo* and their translation in and by the state it became apparent how state managers have sought to defend the most profitable accumulation. This also meant incorporating domestic demands to re-establish order, which is crucial for investment climate. The analysis of the AIOC additionally disclosed how the translation has involved a deeper subordination to the rule of the apparently universal law and no radical change in the enforcing mechanisms occurred. In addition, state resources are a key theme in the some transition processes and that seems to further facilitate the rule of money. Taken together, this shows that instead of triggering decolonisation, the pluri-national state modality is deeply colonial.

Nevertheless, I found that the pluri-national state modality is more plural than its predecessors. While the government's state managers attempt to subordinate autonomy as deepened decentralisation and self-determination of peoples as much as necessary to their advocated model of state that aims to recover the self-determination of the *pueblo*, it has been impossible to annihilate the new regime of subnational autonomies. In this scenario, the yet recent types of state-recognised autonomies have helped to not only partially incorporate the struggles in a certain way, but also to redirect them in a variety of ways. While it appears too early to offer an assessment of change, it seems that overall, struggles in, for, against and beyond the pluri-national state have become more fragmented.

❖ *Research question 3a: How far is motion towards the pluri-national modality historically necessary?*

This research found that the pluri-national state has been necessary for two reasons: The first one is related to the long- and medium-term colonial and nationalist experiences and the second one has to do with the neoliberal short-term experience. As I showed throughout Chapter 5, from early on, the Bolivian state included but also excluded indigenous people. While having been excluded from citizenship until 1952, they nevertheless were indispensable for growth, as tribute payers and as work force. In this, their self-determination was accepted by state managers as long as it facilitated, or at least did not stand in the way of, profitable accumulation. Indigenous people's struggles, in, against and beyond the state were marked by severe tensions between defending their self-determination while increasingly demanding recognition or more profound inclusion. This appears to have strengthened since the state appeared more as a neutral arbiter separated from the economic sphere. The 1952 Revolution (see 5.7.) meant progress in inclusion, yet it came at the cost of recognition as peasants, and meant the assimilation of indigenous people instead of acknowledging them as who they were and how they lived. It also involved a deeper subordination to the capitalist mode of production and the rule of law of private property, since they were recognised as individuals working their small plots. Yet, this revolution remained unfinished and growing resistance from different sectors of society, also finding expression in the *Katarista* movement (see 6.2.2.), as well as rising tensions in the popular block, demonstrated that subordination was incomplete and contradictory tendencies remained unresolved.

In the following military modality (see 5.8.), the indigenous people's resistance was confronted with oppression and violence and a new pact, which did not resolve the inclusion/exclusion tension. Additionally, people's livelihoods in the lowlands were increasingly under threat. In the neoliberal multicultural modality (see 5.9.), the indigenous people's inclusion/exclusion was initially not a matter of great concern to state managers. While the movement grew stronger, the set of multicultural reforms offered partial responses to demands (see 6.2.2.). Yet, it also assured those who wanted profound change that a radically *different* – that is a pluri-national – state would be needed for achieving proper recognition as indigenous subject.

As well as having been unable to resolve the tensions of indigenous inclusion/exclusion, the neoliberal multicultural modality triggered further resistance that it could not incorporate sufficiently in the medium-term. As argued in 5.9., the neoliberal economic model did indeed initially bring economic stability and, through further reforms, some growth was stimulated. However, it did not bring redistribution and left many people in precarious socio-economic circumstances, which fostered

increasing resistance and the formation of a new popular group – especially the *cocaleros* – that replaced the disarticulated strong block of miners.

Even though the neoliberal multicultural modality came with the banner of democracy, it was characterised by limited public participation in decision-making. Subsequently, frustration among the excluded, who suffered the consequences of neoliberal reforms, increased. With the second wave of reforms in the mid-1990s, the government sought to respond to, and incorporate demands from indigenous people and other sectors of society. Yet, this was not enough in the medium-term because, as I showed in 6.2., these changes came at the cost of subordination to the neoliberal model. The events in the first years of the 21st century further showed the inability of the neoliberal multicultural modality to properly respond to the increasingly popular demands and rising pressures from the regions. At the same time, the nascent resource boom created the possibility of responding to internal pressures but also triggered fear of loss of control. As in the case of some previous motions of the mediation, when tensions – in this case, mostly expressed at the domestic level – became too severe, this left state managers incapable of ensuring order and growth. Hence, a restructuring of the state took place.

Having pointed out that the pluri-national state can retrospectively be seen as a historical necessity given previous struggles and unresolved tensions of earlier political modalities, this does not mean that it was inevitable. Suggesting its inevitability appears to imply a predetermined development, which goes against understanding the world through struggles, since the outcome of struggles is always open.

❖ *Research question 3b: How (far) has the 'mediation in motion' translated struggles (for autonomy/ies)?*

In Chapter 6, I showed how different demands for autonomy became translated by and into the 'mediation in motion'. By focusing on struggles, I demonstrated how non-indigenous and indigenous people's struggles partly differ in the sense that indigenous groups' demands have at least partly, and at times, challenged the state form itself in that they struggled for a *different* state that is the pluri-national state. The non-indigenous struggles remained within the existing state form, yet demanded modification. In other words, they were struggles against the pluri-national state idea demanded by the indigenous movements. However, the different strands of struggles are not homogenous in themselves and evolve also through previous interactions with state components (for example, the multicultural reforms) and interaction among themselves (for example, the Unity Pact). At the same time, the demand for indigenous peoples for self-determination remains contradictory in itself: it is about recognition by the state (pluri-national or not) but also about being left alone by state.

The neoliberal multicultural modality was incapable of responding to intensifying internal conflict and facilitating profitable accumulation and so the state form underwent political restructuring. It becomes apparent how the pluri-national state emerged through this as pacts following a highly tense situation that appeared to threaten the survival of the Bolivian state form, which was not in the interests of those involved. The indigenous people who wanted a *different* state did not play a leading role in these negotiations. However, the MAS-IPSP incorporated elements of the demands made by indigenous peoples, including the notion of the pluri-national state, partly to ensure support but also to offer a counter to the departmental autonomies. Yet, the MAS-IPSP's original self-determination project, triggered mostly by the consequences of neoliberal restructuring, was related to the recovery of national sovereignty of the Bolivian *pueblo*, meaning autonomy from international organisations and other states, particularly the US. Autonomy inside the state - as decentralisation or self-determination of peoples - was not up for discussion.

As seen in Chapter 7 and 8, the different demands for autonomy were only partially translated into the pluri-national autonomy regime. In the case of state-recognised departmental, regional and IOC autonomies, struggles were mediated in a way that made them more compatible with a social-communitarian state and growth model, advocated by the government aiming at facilitating profitable accumulation. This is associated with a strong centre and – for the moment – a largely extractivist, export-led economy and appears to sustain economic growth particularly when resource prices are high in the world market. Furthermore, I showed in Chapter 7 how the government, particularly since the fall of resource prices, has taken a more open approach against the autonomy regime, which is visible in a variety of measures, including: strategy documents, proposed laws (adopted with its large majority in the assembly), policies and direct action. However, I also demonstrated that this subordination also remains incomplete inside the state, as, for example, some employees in the enforcing mechanisms work towards deepening the state-recognised autonomy regime.

In the case of the indigenous struggles, it also became apparent that the demands were mediated in a colonial way that does not properly translate their struggles at the ontological level. The state defines the scope and content of what self-determination means and enforces it through seemingly universal laws. At the same time, by providing them with resources, dependency is created and rule of money is potentially deepened, while local dynamics can change. All this contravenes the idea of peoples' self-determination, which starts at the communal level and should not be a top-down process. This shows the continuity in the capitalist/colonial state form, despite the changes that found expression at the political level.

Despite this continuity and the government efforts to limit the autonomy regime, visible in the different components, it became clear that the pluri-national modality leaves more scope for plurality than previous modalities. The different visions of autonomy – autonomy as self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*, decentralisation and self-determination of peoples – are part of the pluri-national state and its autonomy regime. Yet, they remain in tension and incompatible in their realisation.

❖ *Research question 3c: What are the implications of this translation for present and future (autonomy/ies) struggles?*

The pluri-national modality enabled a 'temporary fix' to the major challenges that caused the neoliberal multicultural modality to fall. Yet, the contradictory tendencies in the pluri-national state and the autonomy regime cannot be resolved. As in pre-pluri-national times, within the pluri-national state, there are forces supporting and forces opposing the pluri-national idea. Even though the government attempts to subordinate autonomy as self-determination of peoples and decentralisation to autonomy as self-determination of the Bolivian *pueblo*, this does not lead to the elimination of the other ideas of autonomy in the state.

With this inaccurate translation of the demands for autonomy into the state, struggles have not been reconciled but instead have become redirected and often fragmented. Parts of the struggles have infiltrated the state (for example, the fiscal pact) or could do so, while others have remained untranslated (for example, local control of all resources). In Chapter 8, I showed how this situation has brought great challenges for those who had demanded the now state-recognised types of autonomy.

As shown in 8.2. and 8.3., struggles for departmental and regional autonomy have been partly incorporated into the state as conflicts over resources and competences of the ETAs, either among themselves or with the central state. For example, this is evident in negotiations around the fiscal pact and new or more intense conflicts between *gobernaciones* and municipalities in some cases. In Tarija, the conflict between the capital and Gran Chaco province has also been incorporated into the state. More generally, the figure of the regional autonomy has the potential to be used by different regions against the governor or official with whom they are in conflict. While most departmental autonomies struggle to manage with limited resources, particularly in the highlands, *gobernaciones* and assemblies are in an additionally difficult position due to apparent limited autonomous spirit. Yet, some incidents show that this could change and that autonomy could become a vehicle to address local situations.

The AIOC status comes at the cost of a (deeper) subordination to modernity/coloniality and capital. Not only are several peoples, especially those in the lowlands, excluded from entering the AIOC transition, I showed in 8.4. that, at the local level, struggles for state-recognised autonomy can reflect conflicts over state resources and involve clashes between different visions. This goes partly against

the idea of self-determination of peoples. In several cases, the processes are time-consuming if not stalling for years and have sometimes deepened tensions within the communities. The resulting fragmentation of indigenous people's struggles in communities and the efforts put into the AIOC transition by those who had previously accompanied the struggles and who are now found in NGOs and state offices, demonstrates how struggles have become redirected to the local level. This helps to understand the current fragmentation and demobilisation of the indigenous movement at the national level. Due to a largely disappointing experience in the pluri-national setting, there seems to be a lack of direction regarding how to continue resistance, which could be directed against as well as beyond the pluri-national state. This has started already with the terms autonomy, self-determination, pluri-nationality and territory reflecting the umbrella demands of the indigenous people, which have become captured by the state.

At a more general level, this research suggested that achieving autonomy from state and capital is impossible. The state, pluri-national or not, cannot be used for moving away from capitalism and traditional ideas of development towards a de-colonial/ising alternative since it is a form of the social relations of capital that is deeply colonial. A decolonisation of the state is then impossible, despite being necessary for a pluri-national state that meets the normative expectation; it then becomes necessary to struggle beyond the pluri-national state. For future struggle, this research, drawing on Bloch, recommends a critical rethinking of the state as a category and a focus on concrete rather than abstract alternatives. In other words, instead of wishing for a *different* state, what is needed is educated hope that relates to the 'real-possible', which is informed by current tendencies and credible options (see 9.4. and 9.6.). With struggles for autonomy now both internal and external to the state, this is particularly crucial since different strategies are needed for different aspects in the struggles.

- ❖ *Research question 4: What can the proposed approach to state transformation in Bolivia tell us about the contradictions, capitalist and colonial features in the Latin America state and beyond?*

This research underscored the importance of approaching the state not as an entity, but as a concept to be examined and understood as temporary and spatially specific. The transformation of a state cannot be properly understood without its historical-materialist context and without considering domestic struggles and external pressures that have shaped it and that it has shaped. Domestic struggles and external pressures can be contradictory and hence require mediation. The Open Marxist/de-colonial framework I developed and used for approaching the state proved capable of illuminating the capitalist and colonial colourings of the state.

The importance of paying attention to the colonial features of and in the state goes beyond those parts of the world that were colonised, since, by enforcing the rule of law and money, each state

reproduces certain hierarchies between social groups, cosmologies and so on. Attempts to decolonise thinking about the state must be a global mission.

Furthermore, this research demonstrates that contradictions are inherent in the state and cannot be resolved as long as the state is a capitalist/colonial one. These can often be seen in and between the different components of the state, which also indicates that these are not simply related to the political regime, found, for example, between discourse and policies (see 9.2.).

10.4. Contributions

This research adds to the rich literature on state transformation in Bolivia and the pluri-national state in particular by showing what pluri-nationalism means in practice in Bolivia. While several researchers have already described the present tensions and contradictions in the pluri-national scenario, this thesis offers a way of theoretically and conceptually revealing such contradictory tendencies; it does not seek to reconcile them but sees them as inherent in the state. This is of crucial importance when a growing body of literature refers to the end of the leftist cycle or the return of right-wing regimes, which may trigger a new chapter and compare different regimes, instead of unpacking the complex dynamics of continuity and change.

This thesis proposed that struggles for autonomy are an appropriate entry point for studying state transformation, which offers a great deal of insight into the underlying processes and allows for the incorporation of the idea of a *different* state closely associated with the normative dimension of the pluri-national state. It shows that, in Bolivia, struggles for autonomy have very different meanings and forms through which they assert themselves. It is a particularly convenient point of venture for decolonial struggles and struggles that rather reproduce coloniality.

Additionally, this thesis contributes to debates on autonomy and particularly on movements seeking self-determination/autonomy and calls for further discussion to clarify the concept itself. The struggles for departmental autonomy are a reminder that not all movements demanding 'autonomy' want to be autonomous from the state or capital, as it is often assumed. At the same time, this study showed the contradiction between wanting to be recognised by, but (more) autonomous from the state and how this has played out in the Bolivian practice.

More specifically, this work enriches the growing body of literature on the state-recognised autonomies in Bolivia. By looking at the bigger picture and revealing tensions between different visions of autonomy inside the state and its components, it complements on one hand the in-depth analyses of the AIOC and on the other, the fewer contributions departmental, regional and municipal autonomies as well as decentralisation. This research also adds to the literature on the pluri-national

state idea and pluri-nationality and the struggles for, against and beyond it – which are closely tied to the different demands for autonomy.

Furthermore, this thesis adds to existing state theorisation by proposing an alternative approach that bridges CSE/Open Marxism and de-colonial thought. Opening up the state as a category in this way, this thesis contributes to both the literature on Latin American politics and states as well as the development of CSE/Open Marxism as a theory of struggle (Holloway, 1993). The thesis shows the 'coloniality' of some radical ideas and seeks to push towards decolonising such thinking with particular reference to the state.

Methodologically, this work contributes to existing literature by suggesting some precision with regards to the notion of form and its analysis. I engaged and expanded Dinerstein's understanding of the state as a 'mediation' to a 'mediation in motion' to better emphasise the transitory nature of the state form. In addition to this, I proposed to study the development of the state form through political modalities. This challenges Open Marxists' criticisms of dividing history into periods, but points to the benefits of organising a complex matter into a consistent analysis. Furthermore, I introduced four components of the state (basis, rules, enforcing mechanisms, government), which I see as expression of the universalising but not homogenising tendency of the political form. These can help guiding the form-analysis and contribute to a demystification of the state.

Finally, this research showed how, in such a form-analysis, the notion of struggles can be unpacked further: First, in pre-pluri-national time, struggles for and against the pluri-national idea took place, during which the notion of pluri-nationality was also contested. Secondly, in the pluri-national modality, in which struggles have become incorporated and redirected, I identified struggles in, against and for as well as beyond the pluri-national state. Thinking *transformation* through differently directed and redirected struggles can also be useful for shedding light on other processes.

10.5. Study limitations and agenda for future research

This thesis touches upon large topics and covers, especially in Chapter 5, an extensive period of time. The ambition to capture the bigger picture in its historical context goes hand in hand with some shortcomings, given the limited scope of this research, both in terms of time and space. In the empirical-analytical part of the study, the cost of this has been the lack of detail. For example, to offer a fuller analysis of the state components, I could have looked more closely at *the police and military as parts of the enforcing mechanisms*. Many themes in Chapter 5 could be developed further, for example, more attention could have been paid to the role of military, religion and bureaucracy in the evolution of the state form. In Chapter 6, I could not include the different proposals from grassroots organisations or their internal conflicts and divisions, particularly the peasants-indigenous relation. In

the analysis of the period 2006-2009, a much more detailed analysis of how the pluri-national autonomy regime came into being could have been developed. For Chapter 7 and 8, I could have looked more closely, among others, at the role of the CONAIOC, which appears to function like a hinge between enforcing mechanisms and the indigenous authorities/communities transitioning towards an AIOC.

Given that the experience of the pluri-national state is so recent, a follow-up study appears promising, which could address several aspects mentioned in this thesis: for example, the AIOC processes, including an observation of the fragmentation of the struggles, the fiscal pact, the working of the departmental autonomies and regional autonomy/ies, and potential initiatives of (regional) autonomies. On a larger scale, it is useful to follow-up on the evolution of the contradictions in pluri-national Bolivia and, for example, examine in more depth what the growing importance of China means for the aspired self-determination of the *pueblo*.

The framework developed in this thesis could be applied when studying other processes of state transformation like the Ecuadorian one, which is also associated with an explicitly pluri-national agenda. This might help to concretise the framework further. In this, a reconsideration of (pluri-) nationalism also appears promising for understanding the overall potential of such a *different* state – asking, for example, to what extent nationalism is a modern/colonial category and if its use as a reference point enables one to transcend this, in terms of building up anti-power, or simply constructs an alternative or counter-power that continues to follow the similar traits (Holloway, 2005). In this, it seems also fruitful to critically rethink the notion of *pueblo*.

I also suggest that the Open Marxist/de-colonial framework should be used for making sense of other states, as none appears outside coloniality. Such studies would be important for progressing and critically assessing the attempt to decolonise CSE/Open Marxism further. Another approach that would contribute to developing the epistemological-theoretical framework further could start with a more detailed study on the historical processes involving Dinerstein's notion of '*sub-sumption by exclusion*'.

Finally, more work is needed to address the question of the possibility of decolonising (Open) Marxism and re-engage with the identified limitations in decolonising the conducted form-analysis (see 4.4.). For this, it appears crucial to consider topics other than autonomy, which might provide more severe challenges to the compatibility of Open Marxism and the '*de-colonial option*'.

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